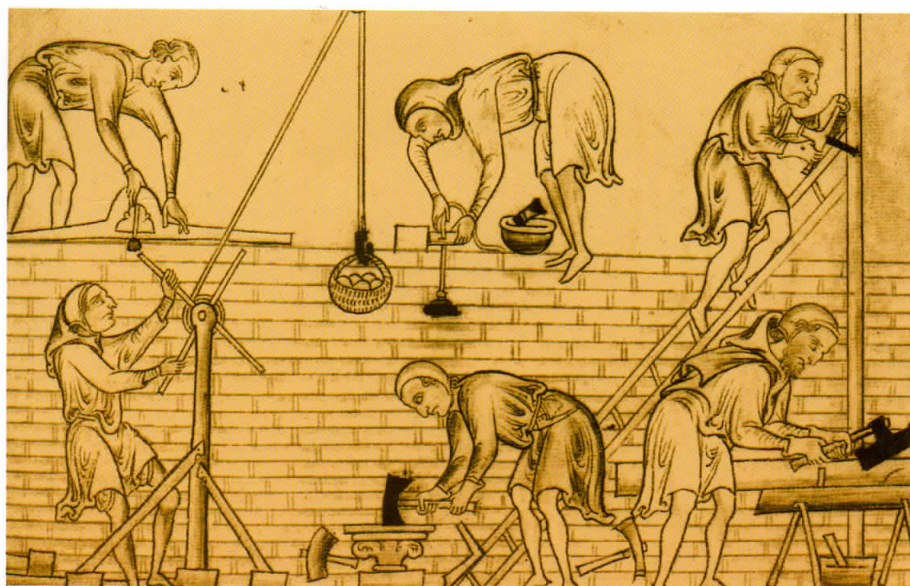


# *From the Baltic to the Black Sea*

## *Studies in Medieval Archaeology*



Edited by David Austin and Leslie Alcock

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# FROM THE BALTIC TO THE BLACK SEA

## Studies in medieval archaeology

Edited by

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## Foreword

This book is one of a major series of more than 20 volumes resulting from the World Archaeological Congress held in Southampton, England, in September 1986. The series reflects the enormous academic impact of the Congress, which was attended by 850 people from more than 70 countries, and attracted many additional contributions from others who were unable to attend in person.

The *One World Archaeology* series is the result of a determined and highly successful attempt to bring together for the first time not only archaeologists and anthropologists from many different parts of the world, as well as academics from a host of contingent disciplines, but also non-academics from a wide range of cultural backgrounds, who could lend their own expertise to the discussions at the Congress. Many of the latter, accustomed to being treated as the 'subjects' of archaeological and anthropological observation, had never before been admitted as equal participants in the discussion of their own (cultural) past or present, with their own particularly vital contribution to make towards global, cross-cultural understanding.

The Congress therefore really addressed world archaeology in its widest sense. Central to a world archaeological approach is the investigation not only of how people lived in the past but also of how, and why, changes took place resulting in the forms of society and culture which exist today. Contrary to popular belief, and the archaeology of some 20 years ago, world archaeology is much more than the mere recording of specific historical events, embracing as it does the study of social and cultural change in its entirety. All the books in the *One World Archaeology* series are the result of meetings and discussions which took place within a context that encouraged a feeling of self-criticism and humility in the participants about their own interpretations and concepts of the past. Many participants experienced a new self-awareness, as well as a degree of awe about past and present human endeavours, all of which is reflected in this unique series.

The Congress was organized around major themes. Several of these themes were based on the discussion of full-length papers which had been circulated some months previously to all who had indicated a special interest in them. Other sessions, including some dealing with areas of specialization defined by period or geographical region, were based on oral addresses, or a combination of precirculated papers and lectures. In all cases, the entire sessions were recorded on cassette, and all contributors were presented with the recordings of the discussion of their papers. A major part of the thinking behind the Congress was that such a meeting of many hundreds of participants that did not leave behind a published record of its academic discussions would be little more than an exercise in tourism.

Thus, from the very beginning of the detailed planning for the World Archaeological Congress in 1982, the intention was to produce post-Congress books containing a selection only of the contributions, revised in the light of discussions during the sessions themselves as well as during subsequent consultations with the academic editors appointed for each book. Particularly in the case of sessions based on precirculated papers, all contributors were aware of the subsequent publication production schedules – if their papers were selected for publication they would have only a few months to revise them according to editorial specifications, and they would become authors in an important academic volume scheduled to appear within a reasonable period following the Southampton meeting.

*From the Baltic to the Black Sea* results from the two days at the Congress of discussions of verbal presentations on 'Problems and Developments in Medieval Archaeology, 4th to 14th Centuries AD', organized by Professor Leslie Alcock and Sir David Wilson. Some of the reasons for the relatively long period between the Congress and the appearance of this twentieth book (Volume 18 in the *One World Archaeology* series), deriving from that September 1986 meeting, are relevant to a full appreciation of its contents.

It was part of the inheritance of the World Archaeological Congress from the International Union of Pre- and Proto-historic Sciences that it should hold specialist meetings about 'The Archaeology of the High Middle Ages' and the medieval 'Origins of Cities' (Ucko 1987, p. 24); originally, and despite attempts by Sir David Wilson in 1982 and 1983 to have such specialist geographically and chronologically limited sessions subsumed within much broader themes common to world interests, the West German and Swedish organizers at that time were adamant that this should not happen and that there should be three and a half days of discussion on 'Settlement, Cultural and Religious Relationships between People and States in the Middle Ages' and two days of discussion on the 'Origin and Social Structure of Fortified Sites and Cities in the Early Middle Ages'. The necessity for splitting proposed discussions of these topics in this way reflected an acceptance of traditional Eurocentric concepts which are discussed fully in many of the following pages of this book. Here it is interesting to note, however, that the validity and utility of the concept 'proto-historic' for certain stages of European development was so firmly engrained that it occasioned continuing difficulties and problems throughout the years of preparation for the Congress.

For many medieval archaeologists, such topics are emotionally laden, even emotive. They appear intertwined with feelings of identity, ethnicity and nationality. They may take the guise of fanatical clinging to the French language (and its assumed associated culture) or of conservatism at its most extreme. Thus, for example, there may be problems of definition and translation of terms such as 'High and Later Middle Ages', 'Early Middle Ages', 'Haut Moyen-Age' (Ucko 1987, pp. 24, 248), as well as controversy over delimiting the areas of 'l'Europe centrale', 'Mitteleuropa' and 'Central Europe'. At another level, although the original organizers were willing to concede in theory that there might be advantages in being able to read and

digest Congress papers prior to actually discussing them, they dismissed the suggestion that such papers should be precirculated, on the grounds that this was without precedence for specialist medieval archaeological meetings (Ucko 1987, pp. 22, 51).

It was no surprise – nor coincidence – that when the World Archaeological Congress was disowned by the International Union of Pre- and Proto-historic Sciences it was these very same West Germans and one Swede who took the lead in so doing (Ucko 1987, Ch. 5). The resulting medieval specialist symposium, as specified above, was still to be subdivided on quite traditional lines: 'Peoples, Migrations and Contacts', 'Settlements and Societies', and 'Forts, Towns, Industry, Coinage'. It was at this time that one of the editors of *From the Baltic to the Black Sea* – Leslie Alcock – became heavily involved in the organization of the meeting (see Ucko 1987, pp. 131–3, and Preface to this volume), and that, as many British and almost all Western Europeans withdrew, participation in it became biased towards Central and Eastern Europe.

Although no post-Congress book had been definitely envisaged at this time – and although the meeting that eventually took place was exclusively based on verbal addresses – it was claimed by Professor Alcock as having been of particular interest, not least because of this Central and Eastern European emphasis (Alcock, in Ucko 1987, pp. 182–3). As a result, it was agreed to publish a volume based on the meeting, within the *One World Archaeology* series, with the editors being afforded the possibility of commissioning new chapters or additional contributions to a particular topic. Unwin Hyman made only one condition: that all the chapters be translated into English. There was only one stipulation about *content* – that in writing a major introduction to the book, the editors should take into account the approaches and attitudes reflected in those chapters dealing with medieval archaeology that had been included in some of the other, thematic, volumes of the *One World Archaeology* series (*Domination and resistance* edited by D. Miller, M. Rowlands & C. Tilley, *State and society* edited by J. Gledhill, B. Bender & M. T. Larsen, *Archaeological approaches to cultural identity* edited by S. J. Shennan, *Centre and periphery* edited by T. C. Champion, and *The politics of the past* edited by P. Gathercole & D. Lowenthal).

The result is one of the first introspective analyses of the practice of medieval archaeology, carried out in the context of a unique combination of circumstances. The analyses, which are unlikely to be attempted again in exactly the same way, receive added poignancy from the recent political, and consequently conceptual, realignments of Europe in the late 1980s. The questioning of assumptions lying behind so many of the terms and concepts used in medieval archaeological discourse – of town, incipient town, city, market, fortification, *oppidum*, tribe, ethnicity, and even the concept of medieval itself – vividly exemplifies the problems that need to be addressed at this time about the very nature and definition of Europe. The discussions in this book inevitably lead on to considerations about identity and nationality, and the sentiments that may, so often, accompany them.



By its very nature, *From the Baltic to the Black Sea* is forced to consider the relationships that should exist between the academic subjects of archaeology and history. Containing, as it does, important new statements about some of the best known of 'European' ancient towns, it focuses attention on the types of questions being asked of the literary – and of the material culture – evidence which is available from the past. This book explores – in a way never before attempted with respect to this relatively recent European material – how far 'culture historical' description based on an unquestioned set of assumptions about the uniqueness of a so-called European tradition is really appropriate. In many cases, it is suggested, on both pragmatic and theoretical grounds, somewhat complacent acceptance of the irrelevance of theoretical developments in other branches of archaeological enquiry can no longer be accepted. On the contrary, such theoretical aspects not only need to be incorporated into medieval archaeology, but also need to supercede the current, historically dominated programme of research design and the 'menu of questions' that medieval archaeology seeks to answer. Without significant change in the nature and aims of medieval archaeological enquiry, it seems at least questionable whether it should really remain accepted within the mainstream of the archaeological discipline. That this is so at the moment is clear from the fact that at several British universities it is possible to graduate with a single honours degree in archaeology with by far the greatest part of the syllabus devoted exclusively to the Middle Ages. That there is something inherently wrong with this situation is borne out by the fact that – while the subject remains so tied to historical enquiry – medieval archaeologists complain about the massive amounts of material that derive from excavations of medieval sites, and yet no agenda of research problems to be tackled has been agreed. The nature of the problem – and the qualitative differences of interpretation that can result from different approaches to medieval archaeological data – are exemplified in some chapters of this volume.

There is little doubt that *From the Baltic to the Black Sea* will cause many shudders to run through the breasts of those who currently feel protected by assumed, time-sanctioned mythological derivations from the past, whether it be in their presumptions about scholarship and politics being divisible, their feelings about the appropriateness of procedures, or their attitudes to the all but sanctified pre-eminence of the written record. In opening up these considerations for discussion and reassessment, this book – with its exceptional blend of contributions – strikes a real blow for the overdue emancipation of studies in medieval archaeology.

P. J. Ucko  
Southampton

## Reference

Ucko, P. J. 1987. *Academic freedom and apartheid: the story of the World Archaeological Congress*. London: Duckworth.

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## *Preface*

The 1986 World Archaeological Congress in Southampton was not a quiet affair and, as Peter Ucko has shown (1987), there are as many views about it as there were participants. In the first place it took many of us a long time to decide whether we should take part or not. This was as true for those at the centre of things, such as Leslie Alcock, as for those on the periphery, such as David Austin. In the fast-moving events of the year leading up to the Congress, it was not always possible, wherever we were, to understand the nature of the problems and to grasp the issues that were involved. Those of us away from the core, even though we may have been physically on the same landmass, found the miasma of rumour and personalized comment a barrier to real communication and understanding. Decisions about participation were usually taken in this context. Yet the final judgement as to what actually happened there, even for those of us who went, depends for each of us on what we saw, to whom we spoke and what we heard. We might feel now with T. S. Eliot (1963, p. 110):

All this was a long time ago, I remember,  
And I would do it again, but set down  
This set down  
This: were we led all that way for  
Birth or Death? There was a Birth, certainly,  
We had evidence and no doubt. I had seen birth and death,  
But had thought they were different: this Birth was  
Hard and bitter agony for us, like Death, our death.  
We returned to our places, these Kingdoms,  
But no longer at our ease here, in the old dispensation,  
With an alien people clutching their gods.

The next World Archaeological Congress will tell us whether it was a birth or a death, but change there has certainly been, and the introductions in the *One World Archaeology* series now give some of us at least a chance to reach an understanding of what was going on, quietly, 'in our places'.

The first point to be made is that much more was happening than we were aware of at the time. This is particularly true of the medieval sessions. There were fundamental issues that simply did not emerge. For example, the term 'medieval' is usually taken to be peculiar to Europe, although others were not afraid to employ it. Among some Europeans, particularly in the West, there is a temptation to use the simple temporal and spatial concepts embedded in the word as a means of distancing themselves emotionally and intellectually from the political and social concerns of the modern world. Secure in our

'European-ness' and content to reinforce its mythology through the restatement of ethnic cultural history, we may too easily allow ourselves to ignore the rather more important implications of our material, such as the nature of development and progress. This is not to deny that many medieval archaeologists, even empiricists, think that the study of medieval Europe is important because they find there the origins of the political, economic and social situations and dilemmas of the modern world. However, this is usually from the perspective of explaining, and thereby perhaps attempting to justify, European cultural and political dominance. Whatever the underlying motivations, which are open to many interpretations, our strongly empirical tradition of scholarship tends to bind us tightly into the specific details of our time, our culture and our space. At the Congress this narrowed our vision while others were exploring themes and issues more generic in their scope and more challenging to the spirit. As individuals, of course, we made contributions and participated in other sessions where many of our prehistorian or anthropologist colleagues were speaking of universal things, turning on key philosophical and theoretical issues, albeit from the solid ground of their own national, regional or even specific site archaeologies. The overall construction of the medieval session, however, was founded on 'old dispensations', open to the criticism of being substantially untheoretical if we accept the currently restricted use of the term 'theory', which appears to deny that status to the philosophical position of empiricism. In this respect it was out of step with much of the rest of the Congress. Yet, paradoxically, it remained absolutely true to the nature of most European medieval archaeology.

One of the purposes of this book, therefore, especially in Chapter 1, is to explore the reasons why this should be happening and to pose the question: is it a problem? At the Congress itself there is no doubt that the immediate circumstances compounded the dilemma. Unlike other sessions, for example, ours had no pre-Congress meetings to resolve the themes that were to be discussed, although correspondence did produce some subject headings for the papers offered by individuals. Even this, however, was thrown into disarray by the South African row, when so many European archaeologists pulled out. With their own, historically related, sense of European time and space, the potential participants in the medieval sessions were especially affected. Indeed, two of the original organizers, plus the overwhelming majority of expected speakers from Western Europe (save for the Scandinavians, and one individual each from France and West Germany) defected from the Congress altogether. It may be that medieval archaeologists in Western Europe, with their intellectual roots in liberal traditions of history which emphasize the primacy of individual freedom, include a higher proportion of conservative thinkers among their ranks than do the prehistorians and anthropologists, with their greater tendency towards sociology and radical philosophy. Whatever the underlying causes, however, the withdrawals meant that there was a strong temptation to abandon the medieval sessions. This was resisted, partly because it would have meant breaking faith with those who wished to take part in the Congress, and more particularly, because those who were still with us were

predominantly from 'Eastern Bloc' countries. The eventual organizer, Leslie Alcock, who had not been one of the three advertised in the pre-Congress announcements, saw in the session an invaluable – indeed a unique – opportunity for scholarly interchanges that are not normally possible. Given the political overtones of the Congress as a whole, this was a chance to affirm that Eastern Europe is an essential part of Europe and that Europe is part of One World.

The resulting session took place, then, against a background of uncertainty and lack of strong central cohesion, with the consequence that discussion tended to centre on specific data and general historical questions. Indeed, one other leading British participant, Philip Rahtz, has already commented in print that the contributions were diverse and particularistic, but rather more as a criticism of medieval archaeology in general than of what was said specifically at Southampton (quoted in Ucko 1987, p. 181). Indeed, what we heard and saw with our colleagues was perfectly respectable medieval archaeology as it is currently understood. In addition we must also acknowledge that we were not entirely isolated. There were a few medievalists, notably a younger generation, who did identify their data and their analyses with other, more theoretical, sessions. This was on an individual basis, however, and what our collective presence at the Congress raised, since it involved not only our session's intrinsic problems but also our juxtaposition and exposure to the current themes of prehistoric archaeology, was a longer-term issue which we begin to explore in this book.

But there is another purpose in publishing the book. In the course of the papers, discussions and informal contacts, the feeling emerged that, although there had been no original intention of producing a post-Congress volume as a permanent record of the medieval sessions, they did merit being made available, particularly as a sampler of a tract of territory in Eastern Europe whose great traditions of archaeological research are so rarely available to the English-reading audience. All of us who took part in the medieval sessions must feel extremely grateful to Peter Ucko for accepting enthusiastically the idea of an extra post-Congress volume, and to Roger Jones, on behalf of the publishers Unwin Hyman, for agreeing to this.

Initially, in order to give the volume unity of theme and content, it was decided to limit it to contributions from the European continent, excluding, therefore, those from the British Isles and a solitary (but no less welcome) one from East Africa. These proposals were warmly acclaimed by those taking part in the sessions, and as a result eight of the papers presented in Southampton have been prepared for publication. They give the book both its geographical range and its original title: *From the Baltic to the Black Sea*.

All the contributions were in and the process of editing was drawing to a close when the editors began to see the results of other sessions in published form. The structure of their Introductions and their general approach were quite different to ours. Extended discussions with the Series Editor led to the realization that the general position of medieval archaeology at the Congress, to which we have already alluded, particularly its lack of theoretical consider-



ation, was exposed and needed to be addressed. The decision was taken to look at medieval archaeology in the light of new theory and provide four additional Chapters, one in a general vein (Ch. 1), another re-examining a specific block of data in line with postprocessual thinking (Ch. 2), a third exploring the concept of Europe within archaeology (Ch. 3), and a fourth from Czechoslovakia taking a comparative and systemic or processual view of medieval landscape (Ch. 4). This material, generated as it was by David Austin and his post-Congress contacts with Prague, eventually forced us to abandon the strict geographical limits with which we began. We have, however, at least sought to strengthen this geographical framework by commissioning a chapter on Kiev; it was not delivered at Southampton but is a splendid supplement to the chapters on Lübeck and Prague. We are grateful to Drs Ioannisyan and Champion for producing their commissioned chapters so quickly. We are also very grateful to all the other contributors for their continued support and patience throughout this long gestation period.

We must thank not only the speakers themselves for transcending the difficulties we have perhaps tended to overstress in this Preface but also everyone else who was involved in making the medieval session so valuable. This includes those who set up and ran the audio-recording equipment and projectors, not least because East European slides seemed so ill-adapted to British machines. It includes also all the scholars, not just the speakers, who attended the sessions and contributed to the discussions, both formal and informal, which followed. The chairmen in particular are to be congratulated for controlling so admirably our polyglot proceedings and ensuring the smooth running of our session.

Finally, we wish to thank colleagues closer to home who have helped bring this book to the light of day: Elizabeth Alcock, Alex and Sigrid Morrison, Ross Samson, June Hubert, and Peter Ucko for much helpful advice in editing the chapters; Amanda Clydesdale and Lorraine McEwan for assistance with the illustrations; and Norma Wakeling and Maureen Hunwicks for producing texts from difficult copy.

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## Introduction

DAVID AUSTIN & LESLIE ALCOCK

Our intention as editors is to provide an introduction both to the chapters in this book and to the wider problems and possibilities of medieval archaeology. Some of the problems in so doing stem from difficulties we have in finding a coherence of approach in our subject as a whole. The issue is contentious and there is no better indication of this than that we, the editors, do not agree with each other about either the diagnosis of, or the prognosis for, the general health of medieval archaeology. Indeed, the chapter that follows (Austin, Ch. 1) and the case study related to it (Austin & Thomas, Ch. 2) arise from what was originally intended as general introductory material, drafted by David Austin alone, but was subsequently extracted and elaborated as his own view. In these two pieces the malaise, as Austin sees it, is defined, and its underlying causes are explored, with one suggestion advanced for a way forward. At the root of this appears to be medieval archaeology's relationships on the one hand with documentary history and on the other with the rest of archaeology. There is, in the view of some scholars, a degree of alienation from both which leaves medieval archaeology somewhat stranded between the two. Is our task the extension of narrative and analytical history recovered from documents? If it is, what sort of history – great events and great forces, or the story of unrecorded existence? And if we are historians, what role does archaeology have in setting the agenda? Or are we, in conjunction with our classical colleagues, archaeologists writing our own text and, in temporal terms, continuing the narratives and themes of prehistory? If we are archaeologists, what is the common ground with our colleagues studying the undocumented past?

In the contrasting view even these questions must be posed in different ways. Are we not, like prehistorians, students of the human past in all its accessible aspects, and in its whole framework of time and space? Do we not use, as prehistorians do, not merely human artefacts but also environmental and other scientifically derived data, as well as nomothetic analogues derived from societies other than the ones on which we particularly focus? Should we, then, not also use, both as artefacts of the societies we study and as indispensable data, a range of verbal, normally written, evidence? There is, in this contrasting argument, no ineluctible requirement that medieval archaeologists should accept an agenda set by scholars whose sole concern is with written sources. Yet it would suggest a lack of intellectual firmness – indeed, a pathetic sense of insecurity – if archaeologists of formally 'historic' periods were to deny themselves the use of verbal sources in order to maintain the supposed integrity or purity of our discipline.

These contrasting views are not fully expressed in this book and readers should be aware that they must look elsewhere for other analyses and answers (in particular, Alcock 1988, pp. 22–3). A clear indication that we should not think in simple polarities is, however, contained in this book; Martin Gajda's comparative study of landscape archaeology (Ch. 4) shows that a lucid systemic and processual approach offers a third view. Nevertheless, the issues are fundamental and challenge us to consider our intentions and some of our basic assumptions, not the least of which is the key relationship with the contemporary document. In the Preface, for instance, we refer to the problems inherent in associating the concept of 'medieval' solely with Europe at one fixed time between the end of the Roman civilization and the beginning of the Renaissance. Of their own volition, for example, some scholars at Southampton who work in areas beyond these geographical limits, both in Africa and Asia, are quite happy to employ this term (e.g. Prematilleke 1989). Why? Is it something more than a vague indication of date, an attempt at synchronicity in much the same vein as, for example, Platt's *Atlas of medieval man* (1979)? If so there is little substance to it other than the purely descriptive juxtaposition of colourful cultures. Or is there some other motive? Are they trying to identify a segment of the past shared by us all, one that is transitional between a distant time of discrete regions and autochthonous activity and a modern time of world economy and violent conflicts of culture?

Here there are undoubtedly issues for comparative study between precolonial Asia or Africa and the European precapitalist condition. Analysing, through the medium of the material culture, the different but interlocking trajectories of peasant and urban communities in Central Africa, China and the North European Plain at this time must be a contribution archaeology should be making to understanding the motivations of the modern world. It is not easy to see how this could be achieved, but in seeking to relate their cultural sequences to Europe and thus make them more easily accessible to a European audience, colleagues from Asia and Africa indicate that common cause should be found in studying the diverse roots of what came to be a convergent experience. This question of our 'European-ness' was latent in our discussions at Southampton, but in an attempt to make this more explicit within the framework of our publication here, Timothy Champion has taken the theme and explored it in Chapter 3.

In the 20th century, for example, and perhaps even since the Enlightenment, we have become rather used to seeing ourselves as Europeans who possess a common heritage, particularly in recent years. We have tended to clothe the Middle Ages in the cloak of our own uniformity, a task made easier by the medieval church's own literate and self-interested attempts to project, and brutally enforce, a myth of Christian catholicism. This notion of 'European-ness' has many aspects, including a vague but mistaken belief among some medieval archaeologists in a kind of pan-European feudalism from Connemara to the steppes of Russia. The chapters in this book perpetuate this simple myth, which actually masks a bewildering array of regional power systems that we have not yet begun to understand on a

comparative archaeological basis in Europe and beyond. Feudalism, however, is a complex historical issue which takes us into the area of documentary terminology, more fully considered in the following chapter, but there is a geographical aspect that is worth noting here. Within the concept of Europe, this generation has grown used to stressing the division between East and West, between German and Slav; this is discussed at length here and elsewhere in the *One World Archaeology* series (see in particular Shennan 1989). The causes are easy to spot, but in editing this volume we have been struck by a much more important division, that between North and South. There was not a single contribution at Southampton from Spain, Italy or Greece; indeed, only one (Crubézy, Ch. 12) had a Mediterranean tinge to it. This division is traditional in our subject. Many a northern archaeologist has been tempted by the warm South, but rarely do we find a southerner interested in our concerns. Several contributions in this book show how often the archaeologist of the northern, barbarian Europe looks to the southern, civilized parts for explanations of northern processes: for example, Bóna (Ch. 5) and Arrhenius (Ch. 6) on Byzantine gold, and Ioannisyan (Ch. 18) on Byzantine architecture and state models in Kiev. By contrast, almost no southern medieval archaeologist discusses the dialogue between North and South. Why? It is perhaps because, as Braudel and others have been at pains to point out (Braudel 1949), the cultures of the Mediterranean have more affinity with North Africa than those of Germany or Poland. It is also perhaps because, until very recently, the medieval archaeology of the South has remained trapped in art and architectural history, from which we in the North have partially escaped, but only in the last 30 years or so.

Finally, we also tend to assume that 'medieval' covers a single span of time. There is, however, a marked contrast in the archaeologies of the earlier and the later Middle Ages. This is often institutionalized, but rarely acknowledged. In Britain, for example, early medievalists are much more abundant in university departments of archaeology than later medievalists, and, as Gajda (Ch. 14) describes, in Czechoslovakia they also exist as separate departments of the Academy of Sciences. This can, in part, be ascribed to the changing role of archaeology in the face of an increasing number of documents from which history may be written, an explanation that is further examined by Austin in Chapter 1. Whatever the causes, the effect clearly distinguishes the two periods. This contrast exists implicitly in the book because early medieval archaeology has different traditions, themes and methods of research from those of later medieval archaeology. An example is the widespread use, in the early period, of artefact classification both to underpin the historical and cultural identity of peoples (e.g. Bóna, Ch. 5, Fülöp, Ch. 7) and to provide chronologies of events such as migration, whereas later they exist to illustrate social or economic processes already identified by the analysis of documents (e.g. Mugurēvičs, Ch. 10).

These issues tend to conspire against the editors' professional desire to impose a structure, a problem discussed at length by Hodder elsewhere in this series (Hodder 1988). Without resorting to his amusing solution, we must

confess that we can justify only the loosest of arrangements. At the Congress itself, partly for convenience, the papers were clustered under three headings: Fortifications and Towns, Settlements and Societies, and Influences and Interactions. In the course of the sessions, however, it became clear that this was a wholly artificial arrangement, largely because the papers touched on an array of topics that constantly crossed the boundaries of the three headings and even strayed into other areas.

Nevertheless, elements of cohesion do come through. The studies of Lübeck, Prague and Kiev (Fehring, Ch. 16, Huml, Ch. 17, Ioannisyan, Ch. 18), for example, derive their coherence from the analysis of single places which absorb, through the medium of settlement morphology, both documentary and archaeological data. This is the grand tradition of topographical study, a pan-European tradition with its roots in the growing sense of history and place in the fabric of the Enlightenment.

If in these studies coherence was given by place, elsewhere it was given by addressing single and specific historic problems, such as the integration of Slav and German in Livonia (Mugurēvičs, Ch. 10), or population size in a small part of Czechoslovakia (Stloukal, Ch. 13). This is not unusual in the archaeology of medieval Europe as a whole. For the earlier period, however, there was a greater willingness to generalize, even theorize, about the wider meaning of analysis and data. What is surprising from the West European perspective is how little the ideology of classical Marxism overtly influenced such interpretations from the East Europeans. The nearest we come is perhaps the piece by Gojda (Ch. 4) on landscape archaeology, where the holistic approach of recent settlement studies is identified as being 'dialectical-historical', emphasizing economic and deterministic explanations. Even this, however, is much more generally systematic in character than specifically Marxist, and here, as elsewhere, the vocabulary of class, modes of production and historical materialism, for example, is almost entirely missing (but see Mugurēvičs, Ch. 10). Curiously, they are to be found elsewhere in the forms of Western Neo-Marxism in other volumes (e.g. Gailey & Patterson 1988), and it is almost as if the whole issue were being consciously avoided, perhaps a reflection of broader political movements which have become much more apparent in the four years between the holding of the Congress and the publication of this volume.

Other elements of postwar thinking in communist Eastern Europe do surface, however, as in the insistence on Slavic and indigenous cultural survival and persistence under the circumstances of Germanic dominance and folk movement. This is at its most direct in Mugurēvičs (Ch. 10), where the German knights and traders were quite simply repressive agencies and class enemies in the Eastern Baltic, but it is also apparent in Marjanovic-Vujovic's analysis (Ch. 15) of rural settlement in Serbia, where there are also overtones of other regional stresses of cultural origin. In most texts dealing with early medieval Europe, however, there is acknowledgement, both conscious and unconscious, that simple ethnic interpretations of protohistorical events and material are no longer possible. Gojda, for example, in his chapter on the

lower Vltava basin of Bohemia (Ch. 14), alludes to this in the restructuring and renaming of settlement phases, preferring to drop the positive and simplifying Slavic label. The older historic interpretations founder on problems in identifying classes of material with specific groups named in the early texts. This is discussed in Kobyliński's study of the Slavs (1989), Bálint's study of the Avars (1989), Paloczi-Horvath's study of the Cumanians (1989), and Martens's study of the Vandals (1989). There is an awareness that a range of potential processes exists, some cultural and some depositional, that can explain even similar phenomena. Folk migration still dominates the perceptions – for example, the Avar movements into Hungary which resulted in the chieftain-burials at Igar (Fülöp, Ch. 7) – but there are complex issues of, for instance, ethnic identification (see Bálint 1989, pp. 186–9) and the transmission of special materials. In fact, both Bóna (Ch. 5) and Arrhenius (Ch. 6) deal with gold and jewellery originating in Byzantium, but Bóna's Avars regarded it as bullion to be reworked in their own styles and workshops and Arrhenius's Germans received it as tribute or rewards to be cherished, perhaps even as badges of office resulting from periods of service in the Imperial armies.

Interpretations of both cultural exclusion and assimilation can arise, therefore, from very similar data. Yet this is only one of a set of processes currently being considered in Eastern Europe. Changes in material assemblages, such as cemetery deposits and rites, may arise from trade and other forms of economic contact rather than ethnic replacement (see Kobyliński, Ch. 8), and Crubézy's analysis (Ch. 12) of skulls showing deformation demonstrates that individual cultural practices can be widely dispersed, almost pan-European, as patterns of behaviour. As such they may be the product, not of ethnic presence or diffusion (in this case, of the Huns), but of other human requirements and processes which are extensive in time and space. Even where migration is certainly happening, there are phases in the response to the colonization of land which result in different kinds of deposit under different circumstances by the same groups of people. For instance, the rich graves that appear in the immediate prelude to fixed settlement among the Avars (Fülöp, Ch. 7) and the Cumans (Paloczi-Horvath 1989) have been identified by Randsborg (1989) as the response of simpler social systems coming into contact with more complex ones.

Changing attitudes to social space are also evident in settlements and their distributions, and both Gojda (Ch. 14) and Kobyliński (Ch. 8) examine the different kinds of clustering and central-place formations to be found at different phases of settlement. Transformations in the organization of political power, such as early state creation in the phase after fixed settlement, can also provide major nonethnic explanations of change, as Malmer's work (Ch. 9) on coins in Scandinavia and the analyses of settlement by Gojda (Ch. 14) and Marjanovic-Vujovic (Ch. 15) witness. Long-term change in the complex social and economic networks of medieval Europe may be expressed not just through the metaphor of material culture but in the human frame itself, as Boldsen (Ch. 11) and Stloukal (Ch. 13) show from their detailed examination



of skeletal remains in Scandinavia and Czechoslovakia. The way in which social structure controls access to natural resources and influences height and child death rates brings us to the theme of environmental relationship, which is clearly one of the issues that must be pursued in the future (Austin, Ch. 1).

The preceding discussion shows that the themes, ideas and information presented here provide many cross-currents and interrelationships, and this has made it difficult to choose a format for the book. Finally, we settled on five rather more dominant themes under whose headings we could present the chapters: Objectives of Medieval Archaeology, Early State and Ethnic Formations, Population, Rural Settlement, and Urban Development.

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# OBJECTIVES OF MEDIEVAL ARCHAEOLOGY

# 1 The 'proper study' of medieval archaeology

DAVID AUSTIN

Know then Thyself. Presume not God to Scan,  
The Proper Study of Mankind is Man.

A. Pope, *Essay on Man*. II, 1–2.

'But, my dear, it's only women who know about such things'

G. A. O. Parry, *Conversations*

## Introduction

In attending the World Archaeological Congress, and constructing the introduction for this book with Professor Alcock under the sovereign eye of Professor Ucko, I was encouraged to question the nature and practice of medieval archaeology, particularly in the light of prehistory and recent shifts in theory. What has emerged is a consideration of my own doubts about my own area of study and the relationships with the wider networks of archaeology and history. It has been undertaken in the context of two other institutional and political events impinging on my time, both of which are connected with the organization of education and archaeology's role within it.

First is the proposed introduction in Britain of a new course and examination in archaeology to be undertaken by school students at the end of their secondary education, usually at about the age of 17 or 18. This will be optional and at the beginning not many will take it, but we hope, as the subject continues to grow in popularity, that the uptake will increase steadily. The objective of discussions among the group organizing it has been to build themes which can transcend the traditional boundaries of space and time that have fragmented our subject. As a spokesman for the European later Middle Ages, however, I found myself with acute problems in accepting these themes, not because I was unwilling or unable to frame a syllabus or questions in line with general topics such as ritual or social organization, but simply because nearly all the available literature on medieval archaeology is constituted to deal with problems and ideas generated not within the discipline of archaeology itself but within that of history. I will explore the precise nature of, and reasons for, this relationship later, but it did mean that it was very difficult to build a directed course of archaeological study which looked at the material evidence of, for example, later medieval burial practices without all our



objectives and conclusions being shaped by our intimate and still active cultural knowledge of medieval Christianity and its canon law. Or, as another example, how could we study the physical remains of fortification in the same way that prehistorians do without being trapped within all the assumptions and forms of understanding derived from our documentary knowledge of the castle and its specific role in feudalism? In the end, could we expect the 18-year-old to study the method, theory and data of archaeology, but at the same time also understand complex issues encapsulated inside historical terminology? This problem jeopardizes the place of medieval archaeology in a unified discipline of archaeology to be placed before the emergent student.

Second, the British government has introduced a 'National Curriculum' for schools, which includes history among the compulsory subjects of study, but not archaeology as such. After considerable pressure it was acknowledged that archaeology did have a part to play in the teaching of history, but the questions now are: what part, and what kind of history? It is relatively straightforward to find a temporal role for prehistory as 'the front end' of the historical sequence, but what about the well-documented Middle Ages? The inclination of history teachers is to use the textbooks, which are based almost solely on documentary evidence, although they may incidentally include pictures of material things such as castles or coins. There is little room here for archaeology pursued according to its own methodologies. There will be even less room if the kind of history which is taught is that of dates, great events and great men. This is the history which the present, Conservative government of the United Kingdom seems to want, and it contrasts sharply with the history of social and economic conditions and change, of the lives of ordinary men and women – the history, in other words, which is constructed 'from the bottom up'. These opposing views of history, often characterized as politically right and left, inevitably draw in archaeologists, especially those who work in historic periods. Indeed, medieval archaeology has long-established institutional alliances with both of these kinds of history, as we shall see, but in each case it is as the junior partner. For prehistorians, finding a place on the national curriculum through history can be regarded as a victory and an opportunity, but the medieval archaeologists must regard it as a dilemma, since it tends to confirm our traditional marginalized role. The reality is that history teachers, particularly the majority who are empiricist, constantly affirm, through practice, the superior value of the document as the source of historical truth. While they might happily allow prehistorians to write preliterate history, they will deny to the medieval archaeologist any chance to build the curricular framework, the agenda, of history in our literate societies.

What is clearly at issue, therefore, is both the nature of history and the place of material culture in its making. And from the start we must be careful to distinguish history as a subject in our teaching and research institutions from its wider meaning as the study of the past. The problems lie in the capacity of the former, fundamentally a documentary history with its own inbred and political objectives, to subvert the latter, and in the process to shut out and trivialize archaeological history. What follows, therefore, although inevitably

rooted in my own space and time, will serve, I hope, to expand on some of these issues in the interests of the wider debate about the practice of history.

### Medieval archaeology and documentary history

What is medieval archaeology? From the first, any definition must recognize that its very existence as an acceptable subject is constituted by our culturally determined temporal and spatial divisions of the past. In particular it relates to Europe after the failure of the classical empires, particularly as a context and a time in which our cultures and present political identities are perceived as having been formed. This perception is underpinned by a body of contemporary and near-contemporary documents which record the names of cultural institutions, names which we still use to define ourselves and justify our political organizations. By these written instruments human motivation, attitude, organization and action are recorded and linked consistently to identifiable pieces of the landscape, physical places and the people who inhabited them. This, in northern Europe, is in contrast with what precedes. For the prehistorian the sole data is the material culture itself, ranging from the microscopic diatom or flint flake to entire relic landscapes. For the historic archaeologist – including here the medieval and classical archaeologist, as well as the Egyptologist, Assyriologist and others – the documents, bits of inscribed language, are a continuous stream of the past's self-knowledge. Their contents, however, both inform and constrain. For proof of constraint we have to look no further than the institutional fragmentation, both spatial and temporal, of historic archaeologies, kept apart more by the culturally specific nature of the language and recorded history than by the other aspects of their material past.

As if in demonstration of this, in the chapter which follows I can speak only for medieval archaeology in northwestern Europe, and the further I get from the shores of Britain the less sure of my understanding I become, not because I do not know the archaeology, but because I do not know the documentary history. At present, within the frameworks of history which generate the idea of 'the medieval' there is a strong sense that I should know the relevant documentary history for the European culture on which I might choose to comment. Under these circumstances the medieval archaeologist has a logistical problem of data size which itself forms a barrier to wider spatial and conceptual understanding. As the number of documents which survive increases throughout the Middle Ages, so they begin to identify more and more named places, and their occupying lords, merchants, priests, and peasants, who are participants in complex societies and economies. At first the vision is blurred and protohistoric, but by the 13th century almost every habitation site in Europe has some surviving contemporary information pertinent to it.

In a sense this should be regarded as a marvellous opportunity to extend our understanding of the material past, but there is a compunction about our 'need

to know' the documentary history which is not healthy for the archaeologist in the medieval archaeologist. However fragmentary, even if there is only the barest mention in an account roll, the archaeologist feels bound, by the rules of historical practice laid down by documentary historians, to pay particular attention to such information and prize it, not simply because of the intrinsic value of the reference itself but because of all the linkages it provides into the understanding we have about the whole society or economy to which it belongs. Thus, for example, if a village we are excavating has reference to a *villanus* with a customary holding of 12 acres of arable land, we learn very little more about the physical appearance or material existence of that place from such a reference, but we can relate it, by using the historical literature, to the general understanding of manorial economy and feudal society. This is a simple example and the relationship is actually more complex, but by such means the view we have today about these societies and economies is dominated by the document, and not by the material culture. This is as true for the practising archaeologist as it is for the casual visitor to the ruins of an abbey or castle.

Most medieval archaeologists are not troubled by such a relationship – many relish it – but this one thing sets us apart from our prehistoric colleagues and is, I feel, a fundamental difficulty. But why? Surely we are being given what the prehistorian longs for, the past's own self-awareness. The first problem is the documents themselves. Like the archaeology, they are fragmentary and partial, particularly for individual places. The variation in survival is immense, from complete year-by-year records of a village to a passing glimpse in each generation. The larger the unit of space and the more general the view, the more uniformly useful they become. Yet there is an even more problematic aspect of partiality: by and large the documents were originally created by the elite to meet the economic and administrative programmes of the elite. As direct statements in their own right, therefore, they are relative and not absolute. Also they were never designed to provide the data to answer questions in the way we, whether historians or archaeologists, seek to frame them. Thus they need subtle and intensive interpretation.

This is true of all data from the past, of course, but for the medieval archaeologist the dilemma is that there is a compulsion to offer our interpretations, not within our own frameworks of inquiry, which we may share with prehistorians, but within those of documentary history, whose primacy we tacitly concede. In other words, far too often the questions, the modes of analysis and the answers, as well as their vocabulary and syntax, are those of the documentary historian. Try discussing 7th-century Poland without mentioning the Slavs, or 13th-century rural England without reference to the manor, and our credentials as commentators on the past would be seriously questioned by historians. We allow ourselves, therefore, to be compelled to integrate, and this carries with it the obligation to understand primary written sources, how to extract social or economic meaning from them, and how to apply them to the locations and communities we are researching. One result

of this need to know another discipline in this way is that the more we make ourselves competent in it, the more we have a stake in it and in the distinctive forms found in specific regions and countries. After a career of reading the documents, the history and the historical geography of the medieval landscape of Britain, for example, I would earn no discredit from my colleagues if I were to say that I had little time, inclination or energy to take on the whole framework of social theory and anthropology, the main disciplines to which our prehistoric colleagues have turned. My attitude, on the contrary, is that we must, and there is an added and bitter irony here: some documentary historians have themselves turned to such theoretical areas, have indeed been involved at the very core of the debate.

The fact is that we have been so trapped by the agenda set by historians and so weighed down with the paraphernalia of medieval history that we scarcely feel able to interpret and analyse in the modes of contemporary archaeology. When we do try, we are accused by historians of, at best, irrelevance or lack of scholarship, and at worst of uttering jargonistic claptrap. This problem becomes more acute the closer we come to the 2nd millennium AD in Europe and the full process of state formation. By and large the archaeologist of the High Middle Ages concedes the primacy of the documentary historian. Yet in some ways we have brought this on ourselves, being too eager to concede the primacy, often seeking to legitimate our comparatively young discipline by tying our data to documented events and phenomena.

If, by contrast, we look for reciprocity from our fellow historians as recompense, we shall be disappointed. Whether theoretically inclined or not, and most are not, documentary historians do not feel in any way compelled to understand or even acknowledge the validity of archaeological data and insights in contemporary periods and regions. You will rarely find, for example, an economic historian using archaeological data and analysis giving information about rural trade (neither, for example, Bolton 1980 nor Duby 1962), or for a demographic historian actually considering the physical evidence for the house when discussing the size and composition of the medieval household (neither, for example, Flandrin 1976 nor Houlbrooke 1984). Consequently, the debate between documentary and archaeological history is more a monologue than a dialogue. And for this we medieval archaeologists have jeopardized our negotiation with prehistory and alienated ourselves from the developing archaeological agenda. For medieval archaeologists, therefore, particularly those learning the craft, there is a choice to be made: continue to elaborate the documentary historian's text or develop one of our own. In operational terms this latter course might have to mean that we should abandon the integration of material culture into the framework of documentary history, at least in the first instance, if we are to have any chance of harmonizing our themes and our debates with those of our prehistoric colleagues. Also, if we are to contribute to an archaeological agenda, we must start to be involved directly in the construction of theory rather than filtering ourselves through the rather limiting research strategies of 'true' historians. In the end, we ourselves will have to believe that the sherd of pottery or the

house plan is at least as important as the documentary reference. This does not mean that we must turn our backs on the document and its contents; rather, we must assert a discourse of our own for the medieval past founded in our own epistemology and data, and use the written record as only one part of a wider suite of evidence, depending on its relevance to our analysis.

But we are a young discipline and such self-confidence will not come easily. Medieval archaeology in its current form is largely a product of the postwar years, when it began the painful process of detaching itself from art and architectural history. It is not well represented in our academic institutions across Europe, but is rather better served by the numbers of professional fieldworkers, often in the first half of their careers and producing data from excavation and survey, often with little time to think hard about what they are achieving. But here we have the source of another problem. A great deal has been excavated, but not enough published and very little synthesized. We have found from bitter experience now that, when done properly, medieval sites, especially later medieval towns, generate vast quantities of material, hugely in excess of the prehistoric. This has made them difficult to publish and it has not been easy to synthesize their various component elements. Studies of specific sites and locations or of specific classes of material – for example, the village, early medieval pottery, church architecture, etc. – tend, therefore, to dominate our archaeological literature and act as a further force for fragmentation of the subject.

Fragmentation and a tendency for isolation within our own discipline have been exerted unwittingly both by documentary history and the rawness and wealth of our own material. We have, in self-defence, particularized, even compartmentalized, our studies. Ultimately, this is a commentary on the lack of clear pattern in the research strategies and theory of medieval archaeology.

### European cultural dominance, ethnicity and medieval archaeology

The influence of documentary history and the unsynthesized nature of their own data are serious problems for medieval archaeologists, but they are essentially operational difficulties that can be overcome. These are not, however, the sole sources of alienation which distance medieval archaeologists from prehistorians. Also at issue are, on the one hand, the nature of current social and political theory and, on the other, the unique place of the European Middle Ages as the provider of example, metaphor and myth in the construction and structure of that theory. We can begin to demonstrate this if we take as a starting point one key debate: the phenomenon of European cultural domination in the world system (see Shennan 1989a & Miller *et al.* 1989). Core elements of this debate are the development of that culture and its influence, its internal differences, and its persistence in setting the vocabulary and agenda of power. There is now a conscious questioning of the assumed superiority and progressiveness of Western material culture. This poses

particular problems for the medievalist, since it is usually represented that the setting point of this culture was reached in the jampan of the European Middle Ages, just prior to the modern centuries of expansion and development. The notion that we might need to discuss the inheritance of conquest, destruction, and exploitation rather than the unwinding of progress comes as a particular shock to medievalists, with their vested interest in the ancient wisdom. What is more, the conclusion that the present is conditioning and culturally constituting the past is also a rejection of objectivity in the empirical and positivist traditions, which in both medieval archaeology and history have been so prevalent that they have allowed us to ignore our own particular role in peddling the myths of superiority.

Indeed, the historical reasons for this dominance lie at the very heart of European culture and underline the pivotal position of medieval studies. Aspects of this have already been discussed in the One World Series. Shennan, for example, has outlined the special role of Migration period archaeology and history in framing the assumptions about ethnic specificity and cultural homogeneity and regionalism which were transferred as unquestioned models into European prehistory during the 19th and early 20th centuries (Shennan 1989b). Yet this set problems not just for the prehistorian but also for the medievalist, as a practitioner of the archaeological discipline. At the same time, the material culture of the Middle Ages was mobilized by archaeologists to underpin and so legitimize the identity and territorial integrity of nation states. And it was also used to demonstrate the evolutionary trajectory and therefore the inevitability of European progress, justifying its extension by conquest and colonialism to the 'primitive' world beyond. Hence in Britain, for example, the work of Brown (1903–37) or Leeds (1913) was directed towards defining the ethnic distinctions of early medieval material which reinforced the concept of England as part of the all-powerful Germanic world. In particular, typological discussions were locked into the discovery of the material culture which might belong to 'tribal' units, such as Jutes or Saxons, identified by the 8th-century historian Bede, and then linking it to points of origin in northwest Europe. In this way archaeology has followed for most of this century an ethnocentric, and racial, view of early medieval Britain as the political and cultural product of conquest and colony, a view first framed in writing in the 8th century. Such examples could be proliferated throughout the Germanic west, the Slavic east and the Mediterranean south.

What is of concern here is not, for the moment, the validity of such an approach but the nature of the documentary bindings which have maintained medieval archaeology in this false position. Throughout northern Europe the Migration period saw the first documentation of folk or tribal names which still carry potency in the modern cultural consciousness of Europe: the Franks, the Bulgars, the Anglo-Saxons, the Danes, the Slavs, and the Magyars, to name but a few. These names are still employed in the historical justification and rhetoric of modern complex states, however much cultural diversification and social change have intervened. In other words, there is a special quality about the first inscription which sanctifies these identities by equating them



with cultural and political origins. This was, of course, the intention of Bede or Gregory of Tours, literate administrators who set about the task of writing the history of their political masters and thereby justifying their growing hegemonic power. For this reason, the histories were written in terms which rooted these early state-making heroes, such as Edwin or Clovis, in social groups of specific ethnic name, with the intention of projecting a mythical but potent image of cultural homogeneity to match the political unity they intended. For archaeologists the unquestioning pursuit of such homogeneous cultural units in the assemblages of burial and settlement has merely perpetuated the objective of the old myth and left many assumptions about social process and structure unchallenged. It has also underpinned, in its distribution maps, notions of 'ancient' or 'folk' territory, such as 'English lands', where ancient rights of abode and political control are sanctified by the names generated and recorded in the first indigenous histories. The same is true of 'Polish lands', 'Hungarian lands' and a whole host of others.

In Britain, for example, the mortuary assemblages of the Migration period are dominated by cemeteries distributed largely in the eastern and southern parts of England, which are consistently labelled Anglo-Saxon. This is done on the basis of both the mode of deposition and the metalwork and pottery found in association, much of which has a common affinity throughout northern Europe, but which is also a fusion of many traits to be found throughout contemporary regions not only in the northern world but also in the Mediterranean and Near East. Why, then, are the burials 'Anglo-Saxon'? At one level the answer is simple: because they are found in a place where, and in a time when, the early historians said the first Angles and Saxons set up their homes in Britain. In other words, the archaeology is a self-fulfilling assumption. The same may be said for any Migration tribal group in Europe which has a similar protohistorical geography.

We can examine such an assumption by looking at other assumptions which lie nested inside it. Are we to assume, for example, that the dead in these 5th- and 6th-century graves had, in life, a lineage and genetic ancestry linking them to single coherent tribal groups? Historians themselves have questioned the coherence and integrity of migration groups, with a body of opinion favouring a bewildering heterogeneity in some at least of the European warbands spearheading the folk movements (Goffart 1980). If the assumption of coherence can be challenged, can that of origin also be? Here we must separate material culture from genetic lineage. In the British context, for example, we need to ask how many people who became skeletons or cremations in an 'Anglo-Saxon' cemetery had ancestry traceable to locations in northwest Europe. Then we need to differentiate this question from one about the derivation of material forms, artefacts which are buried with these bodies. The first question is unanswerable by archaeologists, because we cannot interview the dead; and physical anthropology has nothing to offer. As long, however, as archaeologists seek to identify the groups constituted and mythologized in the early texts, they will continue to confuse the two questions. This is as true of Vandals (Martens 1989), or any other group in

Europe, as it is of Anglo-Saxons. It may even be true of protohistory everywhere (Renfrew 1979).

Yet it remains a tacit assumption among most archaeologists and all historians that the bulk of the dead in these cemeteries consisted of coherent groups of Germanic-speaking migrants, distinct from others. It is for this reason that we as archaeologists stress the similarities and differences in material assemblage which suit the historical and geographical purpose, often playing down the significance of other types of object or ignoring the meaning of total groups recovered from one grave or cemetery. Thus the distribution patterns of certain forms of equal-armed brooches in the Netherlands and Belgium have been taken as evidence of early Frankish tribal location and not of craftsmen and their networks of exchange and market (Kruger 1983, especially Fig. 108). We tend to make the assumptions we do because of the documentary historian's agenda, laid down from the 8th century onwards. We as archaeologists, therefore, may be well advised to turn our back on such long-term and introverted European and nationalistic obsessions and inquire into the social objectives, strategies, and processes of the groups we study. Thus in the context of 'Anglo-Saxon' burial (or 'Frankish' or 'Allemanic' or 'Slavic' or whatever), we might start by examining the ways in which individuals and groups wear and bury certain kinds of objects in certain ways so that we can next inquire into motivations and cultural processes (Pader 1980). This might just stop us, as archaeologists, putting the historical cart before the archaeological horse. Let us explore, for example, the idea that a group living in one area over a period of time may be heterogeneous in descent and lineage location, but individuals received into that group might signal their allegiance to each other and to an overlord by the emblematic display of accepted fashions (Wiessner 1984). These objects may derive from one source of manufacture or one network of markets; they may reflect the iconography of an indigenous majority or an immigrant elite; but whatever these speculations, the deposition of the objects is primarily telling us about corporate acts of group identity and individual acts of social compliance or subversion. We need, in other words, to work outwards from the assumptions inherent in the material as found and not inwards from the written texts with their mixed motives for existence.

It may be, therefore, that these people in the Migration cemeteries became Angles or Saxons or Franks or Burgundians long after they were dead and past caring, simply because the people broking power in the protostates a century or two later needed a coherent identity, a name and a homeland, and because archaeologists in the successor nation states and empires needed, or chose, to sustain that identity within their own current polity and ideology. Indeed, in Britain, we needed in modern historiography to coin the word 'Anglo-Saxon' to create a spurious harmony in the objectives of the early English. This pursuit of identity entered explicitly into the domain of racial superiority as the ultimate justification of the power of Western Europe to which Kossinna and others contributed, perhaps the worst intellectual excess of Germanism (Martens 1989). Since then medieval archaeology in northwestern Europe,



perhaps frightened by this political experience, has withdrawn into a detached objectivity in the debate about ethnicity, although, ironically, by doing so it thereby tacitly perpetuates the old associations of Germanic tribal names. In Eastern Europe it has fostered the myth of pan-Slavism to create the illusion of cultural coherence from the Ukraine to East Germany, which fitted the postwar aspirations of the Warsaw Pact and Comecon. Both academic strategies left fundamental questions unasked about the process and nature of European group self-identification, as I have already argued, because in the very names used to describe the basic archaeological material are buried key ideas of our present sense of belonging and place, intimately linked also to the language bases we now have. This leaves the medieval archaeologist with another dilemma: whether to support or challenge at source the origin myths still so vitally active in the minds of modern European populations and so inextricably linked to their national identities. That these myths are still active, and corrosive, in modern institutions can be demonstrated by quoting from a recent textbook on the history of English law at a point where it is establishing the operating principles of our legal practice; it happily ignores decades of detailed scholarship:

Two centuries elapsed between the Roman abandonment of Britannia and the appearance of the first Anglo-Saxon written laws. In these dark ages (c. 400–600 AD) the British were subjected to continuous invasion by warriors crossing the North Sea. The conquering Angles and Saxons pushed the Celtic population back into the west of the island; in Wales, Cornwall and south-west Scotland. The invaders were different from the Celts in race, religion, language, art and physical appearance, and they brought with them their own Teutonic customs, which even in Caesar's time had been markedly different from those of Britain and Gaul . . . The invaders, like their Roman predecessors, recognised a racial or personal basis of law, so that customs followed people rather than places. As a result the laws which prevailed in England immediately before the Norman Conquest owed little if anything to the Celts. (Baker 1971, pp. 2–3)

Such problems about the point of origin are bound also to the nature of 'original' society. In the forms of history established after the principles of evolution were widely accepted, it became a normal assumption that 'the child was father of the man'. For the social, economic, or institutional historian of medieval northern Europe, this meant immediately that the forms of our modern society – indeed, its fundamental moral and organizational principles – were to be found in the Middle Ages, especially in the gloomy half-light of the sparsely documented 1st millennium AD. Politicians, for example, in search of support for their own kinds of social or economic view readily employed the versions of historical understanding which suited their objectives for the present and the future. The result has been a continuing debate between different ideas of the medieval past driven, or at least encouraged, by permanent live political issues and theory.

One of these threads has been nationalism and the definition of national characteristics, in part through the consolidation, as we have noted above, of ideas of internal coherence and identity, but in part also through the practice of retrospective analysis favoured from the end of the last century. For many years this has assumed linear and progressive development on an evolutionary model and involved an expressly deterministic approach. Thus we have searched for the modern world in the past, whether it be the origins of particular nations or of absolute principles of political, social, or economic structure and process, such as democracy, class, individualism, capital, peasantry, industrialization, market forces, or whatever the contemporary dialogue involves. Such teleological explanations will always be part of the thinking person's use of history and cannot be ignored, even when they are masked by the false detachments of positivism and through 'neutral' or 'scientific' descriptions of objective evidence. This is no place to enter into a debate on philosophical procedure, but we as archaeologists must be aware of the way in which the documentary history of the Middle Ages has been involved, for over 100 years, in a continuing dialectic about the fabric of European society. This has centred on generalizing, embattled texts around which particular sets of evidence have been marshalled and used in related and minor skirmishes. When we as archaeologists have sought for an understanding of the material culture, it has usually been in terms of this general historical agenda, but for the most part fitfully and too often with too little conscious regard for the main core of argument.

### The English village – an item on the historical agenda

To demonstrate the nature of historical practice and the influence it exerts over medieval archaeology, we need to get down to an individual example. What I shall discuss is the village characterized by our own national historians as something especially English and, as we shall see, at the core of our Englishness. Most of the archaeology of the village, including my own, has been conducted within the parochial orbit of that historical position (e.g. Austin 1989). This is not to say that Continental studies have not greatly influenced us in our practice and research: they have, from Steensberg at Store Valby in Denmark (Steensberg 1952) to Demians D'Archimbaud at Rougiers in Provence (Demians D'Archimbaud 1980). What we have missed, however, is the overview which explores, for example, why the nucleated village, as a dominant rural settlement form, makes its appearance throughout Europe, east and west, north and south, at much the same time between the 8th and 12th centuries. There is very little in our medieval archaeology to suggest that we are part of a much wider debate in these sorts of terms, although the question was asked, but not answered, in the outstanding study by Chapelot and Fossier (1985, pp. 129–41). There is also nothing to suggest that we have explored the extent to which this event is solely European, despite early morphological work which strove to identify common phenomena (Uhlir

1972). When and how, for example, does village India appear? The failure to address such questions is not simply an example of British insularity. A glance at the contents of this book will confirm that parochialism is universal. How have we managed to avoid such issues? Primarily, I would argue, because we have locked ourselves into documentary history and this has not encouraged the pursuit of generalizing ideas which are spatially and temporally liberated.

So, one of the fundamental areas of debate in British historiography has been about the nature and development of the English village community. The roots of the debate can be found in the early 19th century, in the discussion of the extent to which Europe in the early Middle Ages was formed by sociopolitical structures of the Roman world or by different forces active in the Germanic and barbarian north. It also very soon evolved more distinctively insular polarities when historians sought to answer certain questions. First, why, in Britain, did certain types of social organization develop at a time when the nation states were forming? Second, why were they more 'advanced' in the Anglo-Saxon, Germanic areas of England than the British, Celtic regions of modern Wales, Scotland and Ireland? And, third, what were the ingredients which made the trajectory of our political evolution markedly different from those in the rest of Europe as the Middle Ages closed and the modern era began? There were, and continue to be, various strands of argument, but they were all essentially retrospective in their analysis and centred on two core concerns: to explain, and thereby provide historical justification for, first, the English system of a Christian constitutional monarchy and parliamentary democracy, and, second, the imposition of this on the rest of the world by conquest, colony and empire. An essential part of the argument was the nature of the fundamental political organism of preindustrial Britain, the village, because it was here that certain key aspects of the English character, it was maintained, could be seen in their basic operation. Such a sentiment was also rooted in the ruralist myths of the English landscape and countryside being generated within a rapidly urbanizing society (Wiener 1981, pp. 51–64). In particular, emphasis was laid on the individuality of the village landholder, with his paradoxical ability to be at the same time both a member of a working democratic community and a bonded slave of a powerful feudal lord.

At first, in the later 19th and early 20th centuries, the documentary historians concentrated on the institutional aspects of the English village. The method was largely retrospective, working from the early modern and later medieval periods, with their rich fabric of documentation, back to the Dark Ages, with its increasingly fugitive references to specific places and institutions. One aspect of the analysis centred on how the pattern of villages, open fields and manors, clearly visible in documents from the early 13th century onwards, had originated and what were the dominant forces or quintessential elements at play in the creation of this system. Another aspect was concerned to show how, during the disintegration of this system, certain characteristics were retained or changed to become the foundations of capitalist and democratic government in the 16th and 17th centuries.

An early text in this discussion was Seebohm's *English village community* (1883), in which he argued for massive continuity from the Romano-British into the Anglo-Saxon periods, in particular stressing the persistence of the villa and tribal systems of lordship, based on estate structures and slave labour. The Anglo-Saxons, in this view, arrived to become the new masters in an old order where they encountered two pre-existing types of social and agrarian system: 'tribal' and Celtic in the west and north of Britain, and Romano-Celtic and 'manorial' in the south and east. The sole contribution of the Anglo-Saxons, he maintained, was the conversion of slaves, bound to their owners on villa estates, into serfs (*servi*), bound to the land on the manors. Villages, open fields and their attendant community-based but servile institutions, in his view, originated in a past back beyond the written document. The subsequent emergence of democracy was due to the removal of the servility in this system through the assertion of the free individual in what he called 'the new order' at the end of the Middle Ages. Seebohm's line of argument had three very specific messages attached:

The freedom of the individual and growth of individual enterprise and property which mark the new order imply a rebellion against the bonds of the communism and forced equality, alike of the manorial and of the tribal system. It has triumphed by breaking up both the communism of serfdom and the communism of the free tribe.

Nor can the new order be regarded . . . as a development from the germs of any German tribal or 'mark' system imported in the keels of the English invaders. It would seem to belong to an altogether wider range of economic development than that of one or two races.

. . . the knowledge of what the community and equality of the English village and of the Celtic tribe really were under the old order may at least dispel any lingering wish or hope that they may ever return. Communistic systems such as these we have examined, which have lasted for 2,000 years, and for the last 1,000 years at least have been gradually wearing themselves out, are hardly likely – either of them – to be the economic goal of the future. (pp. 439–40)

Seebohm's line of argument about the village, therefore, was driven by a radical Liberal view of history which stressed the disjunction between the feudal order and the modern democratic system, which emphasized the recentness of the free individual as the active force in society, which identified the change as specifically English (i.e. generated in England) and not German or Celtic or Roman, and which finally repudiated communism and socialism as both oppressive and outmoded and thus irrelevant to the great onward march of a free society and economy. In these terms the analysis of the English village community was a reaction both to the new socialist texts and to the well-respected opinions and scholarship of Germanists such as Kemble, Nasse, von Maurer, Stubbs, and Maine. Almost immediately Seebohm's driven text was proved to be too unmindful of the evidence and could not withstand the

onslaught from both the Tory and socialist historians; such has been the fate of British liberalism. Yet he did set an agenda which had to be met.

First Round (1888 & 1895), then Vinogradoff (1892 & 1905) and Maitland (1897) addressed the issues of continuity and discontinuity, of the individual and the community, and of the nature and origin of feudal lordship and the state. At issue were English self-perceptions. What emerged in the first decades of this century was a Tory consensus view of the English path to feudalism and the medieval state. In essence it could be stated as follows. The Anglo-Saxons were free Germans, farmers and warriors with institutions whose roots are to be found in the collective decision-making and elective leaderships described by Tacitus in the *Germania*. Their vigour and individuality allowed them easily to overthrow the corrupt and feeble organizations of the later Roman Empire. In Britain, during the 5th to 7th centuries, they fought and won, settling in great numbers in the east and south and implanting the villages and open fields which were the hallmark of the Germanic landscape. They were ordered, democratic, but respectful of their obligations to strong leadership. They swept away the urbanized market networks and the slave-based villa economy, and they cleared great swathes of woodland in the river valleys to establish a rich and fertile land for the first time. The free farmer then suffered a process of increasing downward pressure on his status from the entrepreneurial lord, the church, and the state. Finally, he became the servile villein bound to his land and obligated to provide onerous labour on his lord's demesne, the classic feudal manor, which appeared in the copious and detailed documents of the 12th century and later. Precisely when this happened was debatable. Most historians favoured the aftermath of the Norman Conquest of the 11th century, which appeared to be an event introducing fundamental changes to English society by the imposition of a new elite and European methods of governance and estate management. Some historians embellished this simple picture by suggesting that there were strong regional variations which were also ethnically derived by the process of earlier conquest: for example, Stenton (1910) argued for the influence of the Danes who had settled in the Danelaw, where the English traditions of freedom were reinforced from Scandinavia in the 9th and 10th centuries and so gave different form to the manors of feudal northern Britain. Nevertheless, the clear opinion, until quite recently, was that the Normans and the Angevins of the 11th and 12th centuries forged the institutions and practices of the feudal state as it was to appear for the rest of the Middle Ages, but on the back of the previously established English village community.

In the postwar world, however, such certainty in the sequence and such faith in the power of conquest to change societies have faded. For a long time the Norman influence was stressed, but in recent years the balance of opinion has swung strongly towards the view that the feudal manor, apart from its label of *manerium* and its specific forms of military tenure, was essentially forged in the practices and customs of lordship and strong centralizing kingship in an emergent Anglo-Saxon state somewhere between the 8th and 10th centuries (e.g. John 1966, pp. 124–5). This is essentially a gradual

evolutionary explanation of what has been called 'sociological feudalism' (John 1982, pp. 169). Hollister (1962, 1965), for example, argued that the social roots of feudalism existed in late Anglo-Saxon England, a view that found much support in spite of a rearguard action by those favouring institutional definitions of feudalism and Norman introduction to Britain (Brown 1973). It also stresses a view of change imposed from the top downwards, one which has shifted the centre of focus away from the essential nature of English village farmers and their influence through their communities on the forms of power (but see Dyer 1985), and more towards structural and systemic aspects of their position, such as relative status and economic relations with centralizing authority. In this the issue of whether the village was created in the 5th century or earlier has withered away, as the 8th to 10th centuries have emerged as being the time when England was created.

Documentary history, then, has, with a few notable exceptions (e.g. Macfarlane 1979), moved away from the discussion of the early village as a battleground of the individual, the community, and the state, and more towards the nature, responsibilities, and operations of statehood, governments, and economies. Indeed, the whole balance of British historiography has shifted away from the institutional to the economic and sociological nexus of explanation, but without abandoning an anglocentric and evolutionary overview of the sequences. Thus the medieval village has come to be regarded less as a locus for legal and political structures and more as a productive unit where resources and output provide the objectives of social action. This is a wicked generalization, but it has affected the debate not just about the early village and villager but also about what happened to them in the transition to the modern world. A core concern has been to examine how and when traditional or peasant societies, with their family households as the primary means of material production and social reproduction, were transformed into capitalist economies with commodity, price, and market as the controlling mechanisms. In the dialectic of historical materialism, for example, both the existence and transformation of the feudal peasant economy are essential to an argument which predicts the inevitability of socialism because they provide a clearly documented example, within classic Marxist theory, of superstructure changing as the conditions of production are modified. Within classical economics also the evolution of the concept of capital in such things as the abandonment of customary tenure and the growth of land markets in an increasingly money-based system of exchange is a necessary historical underpinning for justifying the progressive and dominant nature of capitalism in the modern world economy. Whatever the ideological or theoretical position, however, explaining the English village community as an economic phenomenon has, like the earlier institutional debate, distinctive deterministic and teleological overtones. It also involves key disagreements about the processes of change – revolution or gradual evolution, continuity or discontinuity. Here it became critical to know how and when the village ceased to exist as a fundamental component of feudal society and how it was transformed or failed.



## Working to the historical agenda

The foregoing has been a brief excursus into a century of historical concern for the English medieval village, and it has been generalized rather than specific. For the intention has been to set out the bare bones of the agenda to which the documentary data have been applied, and it is the core of my thesis that this was also the agenda adopted by medieval archaeology. It is my contention that, as medieval archaeologists, our awareness of the overall nature of the debate was partial, that its terms and forms of argument were appropriate to documentary rather than archaeological history, that consequently our contribution has been both fragmentary and disregarded within the mainstream of British and European history, and that we must consciously choose our mode of discourse for the future if such persistent marginalization is to be avoided.

First, the matter of awareness. In the outline of historical literature on the village I have been careful to stress the underlying motivations of various positions and trends. This is not an exhaustive or particularly novel analysis, but it is reasonable, I believe, to point out that the literature on the medieval archaeology of the English village has shown little understanding either of these motivations or of the general patterns of argument. To date we have been content with the presentation of empirical data, with a very restricted and limited view of how this is to be applied to understanding the social organization and economic framework of individual peasants and their communities. Analysis of buildings, for example, has been limited to the chronology and technology of house types and a great deal has been written about their reconstruction from archaeological evidence (e.g. James *et al.* 1984). This may provide a static context, a stage set for the history of medieval rural life, but it is not actively involved in constructing that history. Archaeologists have told us little yet about the meaning of those buildings and about how they helped to constitute peasant life in the Middle Ages. This theme will be pursued in Austin & Thomas (Ch. 2, this volume) but I wish here to emphasize that at least part of our problem lies in the introspection and the too-close involvement with the direct relationships between the data of historians and our own, such that we do not understand the wider objectives of history to which we should aspire. Thus if one of the ultimate aims of the history of the village is to study the power of the individual peasant to act upon or influence his or her social, economic, and physical context, then we should be finding ways of reading the physical evidence of the buildings to tell us this instead of worrying endlessly about the position of crucks or the type of roofing materials to which reference may be found in this or that specific document. I am here beginning to open up a distinction between a lower- and higher-level relationship between documentary and archaeological history. This leaves us with a 'seeming paradox'. I am arguing that we *do* follow an historical agenda, but largely at the lower level of operation, with little awareness of the higher. For this reason we appear to follow in the wake of the historical agenda, but only in such a way that we exclude ourselves from contributing much other than bright images, painted backdrops, to the main objectives of history.

To demonstrate this I wish to follow briefly the trajectory of literature on the archaeology of the English village community and relate it to the trends I have described in the previous section of this chapter. In the early years of medieval archaeology, before 1945, the Tory historical sequence was almost universally accepted by archaeologists as the chronology of the village. As we have seen, 5th- to 7th-century cemeteries contained the early English dead. Archaeologists also supported the idea that the landscape had been transformed by the plough into open fields by the free farmers in their villages. This was, however, on the basis of virtually no hard evidence for the physical existence of the early English village. Instead, what little settlement information was available from *Grubenhäuser* on such sites as Sutton Courtenay (Leeds 1923) was employed, not to examine the concept of the village but to stress how primitive 'our ancestors' were. In other words, archaeologists stated the barbarian baseline from which our culture progressed, and the primary use of the material information was to elaborate and illustrate the processes identified by documentary history. Thus Leeds, in his classic 1936 work, *Early Anglo-Saxon art and archaeology*, tackled questions about how lowland Britain was invaded, which Continental tribal groups were involved, and to what extent Romano-Celts were assimilated by Anglo-Saxons. In his introduction he stated:

In these chapters I have endeavoured to leave history almost entirely on one side, and, treating the material purely from an archaeological standpoint, to fit it within certain more or less determined historical limits, the time at which the invasions are stated to have begun and that at which Christianity became firmly established in Anglo-Saxon England. (p. xii)

The rest of the book, however, shows clearly that he meant, in leaving history aside, to accept unchallenged the 'truth' of its documentary information and its interpretations as the unquestioned framework of discussion. These were the untouchable facts and archaeology provided mere ancillary information to fill them out. Leeds, in other words, failed to engage his data in the higher level of debate in history and nowhere in his writings is there any sign that he was aware of what was at stake in establishing the Germanic and Anglo-Saxon roots of our institutions. It is in early works like this, indeed, that archaeology's role as *ancilla*, 'handmaiden', to history, was tacitly acknowledged by its own practitioners, and such an attitude still forms the basis of a strong 'scholarly' tradition in medieval archaeology. In this way, therefore, the accumulation of archaeological fact within the historical framework meant not only that the basic chronology and processes went unchallenged but also that the reasons why the framework was constructed in the first place went largely unnoticed and unquestioned. The wider philosophical and political implications of the historical debate appeared to be of little or no concern to the medieval archaeologist right from the start of the discipline. Infilling history in this way, with data, left its objectives fragmentary and its contribution insignificant in the eyes of documentary historians.



When we come to consider the archaeology of the later Middle Ages before 1945, the situation was even worse. The study was elitist and devoted to the history of European high art. This limited it almost exclusively to architectural history and the artistic achievements of Western European culture: the great artefacts of great men. An enormous number of castles, great houses, and abbeys had their archaeological deposits wantonly destroyed by clearance excavations whose almost sole intention was to display England's great historical heritage by revealing their ground plans or other architectural details and little else. These excavations were sanctioned and financed by a state grateful to have in its care the products of the great and the good whose names and deeds appeared in documentary history. There was no research on the deposits and few reports were published. Thus any archaeological insight into how these places fitted into the life of their times was felt unnecessary or even gratuitous. There was a feeling that documents told us all we might possibly want to know about the period and its people. At a time, therefore, in the first half of the 20th century, when the great seminal publications of prehistoric and Roman sites were appearing in Britain to lay the foundations of archaeological understanding in those periods, medieval archaeologists produced almost nothing for all their activity, because, in the presence of history, it was not felt necessary. Such attitudes still prevail in a sector of archaeology concentrating on the architectural history of great buildings and on the art history of beautiful things.

It is also diagnostic, perhaps, that so little archaeological interest was shown at that time in the physical aspects of rural life and its social and economic actions. To attribute this, however, solely to a class-based elitism or a failure to assert the value of archaeology would be simplistic. In a way it was easier to relate the 'big' sites to political and institutional history, which was then dominant, than to tie the archaeology of villages to social or economic history as it had been written up to that time. The language and texts of great events, of warfare, invasion, councils, and the lives and motivations of the powerful, could incorporate great architecture, the places where things happened, albeit in a superficial fashion. By contrast, the early work on village institutions was couched in such a form that the material existence of the rural past was irrelevant, or at least totally subservient to the abstraction of the social consciousness. Archaeology simply could not speak the same language and therefore could not have life in this context. But history moved on, as we have seen, to consider peasant life, systems of production and reproduction, and the processes of social and economic change, and as it did, archaeology could find common cause and language with history and it developed to provide data for the new debates. Thus excavation and fieldwork began to 'discover' the deserted medieval village, but this happened because social and economic historians, such as Beresford (1954), Postan (1950), Hoskins (1951), and Hilton (1947) demonstrated from documents that it *should* exist. Their initial concern was to discover physical evidence for what they found in the documents, a transformation in the idea of property by eviction and the establishment of land markets which led to the creation of capitalism.

Beresford, indeed, started the famous excavations at Wharram Percy in the hope of confirming its date of desertion to help his argument that the Tudor surveys and accounts of large-scale eviction and desertion were true and not gross exaggerations by a disaffected peasantry (Beresford 1971, p. 72). In other words, he sought to use archaeology to confirm a type of documentary data: this was archaeology as lower-level history. From this early start in 1949, Wharram, along with many other deserted-village excavations, has in fact provided a clear record of how medieval archaeology has followed the documentary paths of historical inquiry rather than generating its own avenues of approach. After the initial pursuit of the theme of desertion, emphasis in historical publication switched towards the social condition of the peasant, and Hurst attempted to relate house plans to the documented class structure of landless cottager, villein and freeman (Hurst 1965). Although still quoted, such direct equivalences can no longer be sustained, since the range and regional variations of types suggest that many factors other than simple distinctions of status were at work. There was also support for Postan's view of population growth and collapse (Postan 1966) in interpretations of the sequences of the church (Hurst 1971, p. 133). Because, it was argued, the church steadily grew in size from the late Anglo-Saxon period to the 14th century, this was claimed as a direct analogue of population growth. In the same way, its reduction was caused by decline after the Black Death. Again, because this took little notice of changes, for example, in liturgy and the religious structures and motivations of medieval communities, the underpinning of documented population growth is seen now to be simplistic (Bell & Beresford 1987, p. 205). Then continuity became a dominant concern after the work of Finberg, John and others began to challenge the old Tory view of Anglo-Saxon history (Finberg 1972, John 1966). So the strategy of research at Wharram turned towards establishing the linkages between the preceding Romano-British landscape and the Anglo-Saxon (Hurst 1976). Much work was done, for example, on medieval boundaries, where traces of prehistoric and Romano-British ditches found under them were taken as proof of continuity, whereas all they could actually prove was congruency. In all this, publication still clung, despite a lack of evidence, to the idea that the settlement started as an early Anglo-Saxon village nucleated around the church: the old Tory view (Hurst 1976, Fig. 11.1). However, once historical attention began to emphasize the importance of the later Anglo-Saxon manor and lordship in the context of early state formation, and as this view was supported by historical geographers such as Roberts (1972), Sheppard (1974) and Harvey (1980), through the techniques of morphology (Roberts 1987), so the possibility of seigneurial planning of the village and field system was explored and evidence already to hand was reinterpreted (Hurst 1984). Wharram then 'became' a piece of late Anglo-Saxon or Norman planning.

All this is not to say that the archaeology of Wharram, or any other deserted medieval village, slavishly or uncritically followed the agenda of documentary history, nor that it is wrong to adjust interpretations over time, but that, in publishing results, those interpretations which provided validation

for, or additions to, the documentary evidence for current historical discussions were emphasized. There has been safety for medieval archaeology in following the established text rather than creating one of its own. A glance at the structure of the classic book on the later village, written by Beresford and Hurst (1971), confirms the ascendancy of the historian who commented on the significance of the archaeology, an academic procedure which was not reciprocated. This is a testament, if nothing else, to the feelings of uncertainty that lurk in the breast of the medieval archaeologist.

In recent years we have begun to fare somewhat better in archaeological work on the rural communities of the 1st millennium, perhaps because there is so little direct documentary evidence and we feel able to operate more like prehistorians. Although for cemeteries the old typological debates about ethnicity still rage on, there has at least been an attempt to understand other aspects of social behaviour such as status and gender (Arnold 1980, Hirst 1985), family and community (Hawkes 1982, Hills 1984), and rite (Hogarth 1973). The archaeology of settlements has made, however, little comparable advance in the analysis of past human action. We now have a great deal more data about vernacular building traditions (James *et al.* 1984) and settlement plans, but what little has been made of it has again been driven, as at Wharram, by morphology and the historian's reconsideration of the state-forming processes in later Anglo-Saxon England. Our major settlement excavations, such as Catholme (Losco-Bradley and Wheeler 1984), Chalton (Champion 1977), Cowdery's Down (Millet and James 1983), and Raunds (Cadman 1983) have shown how hamlets and dispersed farms with restricted forms of internal division came to be abandoned in large parts of lowland, arable England and replaced by large villages with tightly structured patterns of subdivision. The analysis has interpreted this in terms of documented processes, since they appear to illustrate brilliantly the physical aspects of centralization, intensification and the rise of dependence and individual property, the hallmarks of state and increasingly powerful elites. The importance of this must not be undermined, because it has at least spelt the final end to the Tory chronology and its myth of the Englishman's village (see Taylor 1986, pp. 109–50, Webster 1986, pp. 133–42 for discussion). But the view remains limited, and much still lies in excavation reports or particularistic studies of individual types of phenomena. Webster, in her recent review of the situation, summarized it as follows:

Now that Anglo-Saxon archaeology has, as it were, come of age in terms of breadth and sufficiency of data, the need for more overall synthesis becomes pressing. With it goes a need for a revised philosophy of the subject. (1986, p. 156)

I would echo this but I would also urge a philosophy which can be sustained for the archaeology of all historic periods everywhere.

### A revised philosophy?

In Webster's view a revised philosophy does not lie in separating archaeology from documentary history; rather, she feels:

History is a unified discipline: what is required is a new theoretical and methodological framework in which documentary and archaeological evidence are scrupulously assessed in tandem. (1986, p. 156)

The problem has been, however, that such pious hopes of real interdisciplinary activity have generally failed to convince historians, and for good reason. While we persist in offering titbits of information to them in their own terms, we cannot expect them to acknowledge the importance of the texts we produce. The synthesis which Webster so rightly advocates for early medieval archaeology cannot be produced with sufficient conviction to claim the attention of our society and its historians until we know what we can legitimately say for ourselves as archaeologists from our own evidence. This requires our own processes of analysis, our own language, and our own agenda, rather than an attempt to build on assumptions not of our own making to a design dictated by others. In terms of the English village community, for example, the archaeological synthesis will begin in earnest when we abandon the documentary notions buried inside the terms 'English', 'village,' and 'community', and strive to construct a coherent story of the rural past which can be integrated within a higher-level history where we can debate the trajectories of social organization, the role of the individual mind, and the objectives of humanity. We have shown these concerns to be the ultimate matter of history, yet they are exactly what medieval archaeologists have usually failed to address.

By and large, in our fragmented state, we medieval archaeologists have little common ground and we have no clear agenda. We have been locked into our own bits of data, which we have related to our own national and documentary histories rather than to each other. How, then, do we proceed? I shall examine this in terms of two other questions: how do we achieve the archaeological text for the more recent past? and, how do we agree the terms of any higher-level agenda with historians?

### Prehistory and theory

To answer the first question we can begin with our relationship to prehistory and its theoretical and methodological base. Harke, as reported by Scarre (1988), is only the most recent of a long line of archaeologists (see also Clarke 1973) to sue for a closer understanding between prehistorians and historical archaeologists, if only to allow the former to use analogies and models from documented but otherwise similar communities working in the same landscapes. Of course, this is predicated on an essential misunderstanding: the very

fact of documentation itself is an agent of transformation, because it is a system of bureaucracy often recruited to the objectives of centralization and early states or empires. The medieval charter, for example, was itself involved directly in changes in the nature of ownership and eventually helped to subvert the activities of the peasant farmer, by facilitating greater external demands and controls on mind, time, energy, and output. Prehistorians, therefore, must be careful in looking for simple analogues in medieval Europe; on this one fundamental criterion the study of the two periods is different. A society which documents itself is of its very nature a different form of society from one which does not. Yet we might ask, how different? Prehistorians and medieval archaeologists might together argue that the primary difference is not in what the documents say but in what they signify and what role they play in the material discourse of power among social groups.

Here we begin to seek common ground with our prehistorian colleagues. Another approach might be to write an archaeological chronology at the basic level of sequential data. Thus, for example, an archaeology of rural settlement which ignores ethnic or temporal boundaries determined by documents, logging diachronic change and synchronic relationships for given environmental contexts: farms and villages in lowland England from 1000 bc to ad 1000 without the assumption of Romans, Anglo-Saxons, or Danes, or settlements in Bohemia for the same period without the Slavs (for one attempt at this see Jankuhn *et al.* 1977).

Yet another, and much more important, approach would be to adopt more explicitly theoretical positions by which we can couch our discussion in the same epistemology as prehistorians (Hodges 1983). This has been urged since the beginning of 'New Archaeology' and has seemed to some an attractive proposition (Rahtz 1983). Until recently, however, this has been avoided by most medievalists. Much new archaeological theory used by prehistory was employed, at least in part, with the intention of revealing what otherwise is unknowable: the black box (Clarke 1972). The function of idealizing models, of systems matrices, and analogues was either the simple supplementation of data or the more subtle provision of holistic contexts for the explanation of social and economic processes to which the archaeological information was otherwise an inadequate guide. Take the use of spatial models and locational theory, derived by New Archaeology out of geography. One of its prime intentions was to reveal the extent and nature of territory 'belonging' to both individual places and groups of sites; another was the wish to rank prehistoric places in systems of hierarchical activity, usually economic, but also socio-structural. There was no other more valid way of knowing these things. In medieval archaeology, on the other hand, apart from the very earliest, protohistoric periods in Europe, territory and levels of economic activity could be revealed from documents, either by retrospective analysis of postmedieval map evidence or by cartographic representations of economic or political information from documents. Historical geography or topographical history was better equipped than archaeology to provide this kind of information. So, by and large, medievalists did not become involved in New

Archaeology, particularly for periods after the 10th and 11th centuries. The irony of this is that quite patently New Archaeology was employing the methodologies of other paradigms to write the positivist history of an undocumented past, despite its protestations to the contrary (Courbin 1988, pp. 150–55, and see Austin & Thomas, Ch. 2, this volume).

Such borrowings of methodology caused operational difficulties. Classic central-place theory, for example, acquired from economic geography, was originally designed on the presumption of recovering total data or at least samples of known size for synchronous locations. Neither is very easy to achieve in archaeology, if at all, and, although in prehistory the manipulation of data through such models could be justified on the grounds that it did at least focus the debate on economic systems in the absence of anything else, in historic periods document-derived texts on towns and their economies provided a better-founded model. Medieval archaeologists, therefore, tended to use this rather than New Archaeology. Central-place theory was also predicated on classical economic land-rent theories for capitalist, competition-based markets and bureaucratic centralized states, neither of which fitted the feudal or prefeudal systems. Although dynamic models of central-place development, derived from anthropology, provided alternative trajectories of process (e.g. Smith 1976), it has always been possible for historians and historical archaeologists to deny that modern analogies for peasant- or kin-based centres and markets could be applied to the context of medieval Europe. This has not entirely stopped medieval archaeologists from attempting to broaden the debate by the use of such methodologies (Hodges 1982, Randsborg 1980) and by urging a more global and less parochial approach, but when they have, historians and medieval archaeologists alike have severely criticized them.

In essence, therefore, the failure of New Archaeology to convince European medievalists has been due to the constant presence of documentary history as pre-eminent paradigm, analogy, and explanation of the past: in other words, it provided many of the intellectual procedures which prehistory sought from this form of theory. In this respect, by filtering itself through the structures and data of other disciplines, archaeology failed to find its own voice, became more concerned with systems and methods than with fundamental ideas about human behaviour and social action, and thus severely jeopardized its own sense of identity. More particularly here, New Archaeology failed to challenge seriously medieval archaeology's established relationship to medieval documentary history, as described throughout this chapter. Indeed, the phase of New Archaeology generally confirmed medieval archaeologists in their denial of any role for theory other than empiricism in their work. Their adoption of empirical and pragmatic methodologies has continued to allow them to make implicit their coherent ideas about social structure and social action to the extent that they may even deny possessing overarching ideas and a priori images of the past. This reluctance to be theoretically explicit is often expressed superficially as an aversion to sociological or anthropological jargon, even though at the same time they will happily accept the jargon



imposed on them by documents and documentary historians, such as villein, borough, burgus, feudalism, and castle. Such a state of affairs cannot continue.

There has been a sea change among our prehistorian colleagues in the further development of theory (see Austin & Thomas, Ch. 2, this volume), and medieval archaeologists must consider the new situation carefully. Quite simply, our general position about theory and our relationship with documentary history are no longer tenable.

In the first instance, whether or not we are avowed empiricists, and most medievalists in the West European tradition are, we must first recognize that we do, as we have discussed in the earlier section on the historiography of the village, consciously or unconsciously already adopt and develop ideas about the patterns of human behaviour in the past. This is true whether we are discussing feudalism or looking at the regional traditions of building or pottery making. Discussion of theory merely seeks to make this more explicit, so that the structure and content of underlying assumptions can be examined openly and rigorously. At the same time, however, theory in archaeology also attempts to involve the actions and organization of the past in the philosophy of the present.

In both these ways theory is central not just to archaeology alone but to historical study as a whole, because theory is about the nature of human behaviour in its contexts of space and time. Indeed, it is the vital active link between the documented and the undocumented past. But making sense of theory's bewildering variety often, as mentioned before, defeats the energies of the archaeological historian, already pulled in so many different directions. One way forward is the reduction of theory to key elements, justifiable only in the specific effort to find, in the first instance, common ground with prehistory. Theory in this fashion may be divided into three subjects: humanity as individual, humanity as social being, and humanity as member of the biosphere. Of course, they are interdependent, but these headings represent the emphases of different approaches and different ideological positions. The first reveals and analyses the role, the identity, the motivations, and the responsibilities of the individual. As such it tends to stress the individual as the agent and instigator of action as well as the source of the will to act. It seeks, therefore, to identify the subjectivity of the individual. The second discusses the place of humans within social structures and social processes. Such discussions in the past have had a tendency to be deterministic and teleological, with individuals subject both to the movements of history's forces and to the exigencies of the systems within which they attempt to operate. In such a view structures dominate, diminishing the role of the individual as agent. Within this body of theory, two particular foci can be identified: one, usually associated with Marxism, which argues the primacy of economic forces, such as modes of production, exchange, price, and markets; and the other which argues the primacy of functional group strategies, such as kin, village, tribe, state, and the pattern of power within them. The third regards the individual and the social unit as component elements and beneficiaries of the global biomass. This also has had a tendency towards determinism, particularly

climatic and topographical, but is more recently systemic and contextual in its emphasis.

If we contrast, for the Middle Ages in Europe, the documentary and archaeological historiography within this hierarchy or spectrum of theory, we find that the nature of the debate and the forms of the data available have tended to pull the practitioners towards the opposite poles. The individual and the individual mind have appeared to be more readily identified and isolated in the written than the material text. It would seem to be more difficult in archaeology than documents to identify specifically the individual since writing provides both name and record of action assignable to that name. Medieval archaeologists, in locating the individual in the past, have borrowed these documentary identities and applied them to their material, putting kings in castles or hillforts. Indeed, a spurious enhancement of material culture occurs when documented figures of the past can be directly identified with specific pieces of archaeology. Such direct identification is rare and exceptional in archaeology except in certain circumstances, and then it is often writing found in an archaeological context that provides identity, as in the case of Childeric's name on a ring. By contrast, however, it is possible to provide, unexceptionally and as a matter of course, generic identities, locales where an individual mind can be said to have been active, whether it be the skeleton buried with its personal possessions or the internal arrangements of a peasant's house. These locales can betray dispositions or unwitting remnant symbols of the individual psyche; they can also provide evidence for the choices made by the individual mind and the social constraints acting on it. In these terms medieval archaeologists can reject any claim by historians to a monopoly of understanding about the individual person in history. Indeed, with their broad range of data, they are better placed to see the creative mind and the individual will active within society without the distorting lenses of biased documentation and its historical interpretation. This is an area that needs exploring within the terms of new theory.

At the other end of the spectrum the situation is reversed, for the processes and forms of the biomass appear largely the matter of the physical scientist. Although documents may give glimpses of past natural events and phenomena, usually the more extraordinary, it is not until systematic scientific observation begins in the modern era that written records can rival the information locked in an ancient deposit. Past environments, including human interaction, are better revealed by archaeology and its allied sciences than documentary history, despite the false assumptions of some that historical texts can be used as sources of scientific statement (e.g. Lamb 1977, pp. 243–79). What is surprising, therefore, is how little historical ecology is written for the Middle Ages by the archaeological scientist, and even more surprising is how poor is the recovery of ecofacts on many European medieval sites. More often than not the lines of inquiry are subverted into either the lacunae in documentary information (see Harvey 1983) or the objectives of economic explanation and description, usually about agricultural systems, rather than into the framework of understanding past environments. Thus



there is emphasis on proportions of animal bones, meat weight, wheat varieties, and food storage and processing (e.g. Grant 1988) rather than on the natural history of the medieval farmyard and field or the ecological consequences of drainage or woodland clearance.

In the middle lies the zone of social theory, where archaeology and documents should meet on equal terms but where, as we have shown, they seldom do. This will require a great deal of attention in the future and it would be foolish of me to attempt here, in a polemical chapter of this sort, any reduction of the framework of this body of theory to the requirements of our subject. Suffice it to say that medieval archaeology to date has limited itself to very few aspects of recent social theory, and it would be better here to draw attention to two key issues, also explored in other One World publications (particularly Champion 1989, Shennan 1989a, Miller *et al.* 1989, Gledhill *et al.* 1988, Hodder 1988), as a prelude to one detailed example (Austin & Thomas, Ch. 2, this volume).

First, there has been a recent trend among historical sociologists towards explaining the forces of social formation and change through the detailed empirical testing of ideas and constructs within the medium of history extensive both in time and space (e.g. Mann 1984). This is different from the phenomenon of historians or prehistorians examining their own periods and places using the ideologies of specific social theories and the tools of sociological or anthropological methodology. Instead it marks a return to the overviews of social organization taken by philosophers such as Durkheim, Marx, or Weber when setting up and justifying their interpretations of the dynamics operating through time in society (Skinner 1985). Part at least of the reason for doing this is a crisis of belief, general in Western intellectual life, in the truth of social evolution as being both linear and gradual and in the goodness of, even the objectives of, social progress and development. This has required, therefore, rethinking the historical arguments of great social theories which are rooted in both evolution and optimism. The sources of this crisis are many – not least concern for the global environment, the structural problems of socialist praxis, and the sickening realization that the mushrooming growth of the capitalist world economy is hastening our retreat from Eden. Notions of our secular Fall have yet to be tempered with renewed hopes of a materialist Redemption, even from the heirs of Adam Smith.

Second, 30 years of linguistic philosophy have produced a theory, or theories, of language which are applicable to both the generalities of the social condition and the specifics of archaeology. Poststructuralism has become, archaeologically, postprocessualism in which a series of propositions about the nature of text are being explored (Hodder 1982, Shanks & Tilley 1987). Fundamental is the assertion that language is not simply the medium of social action but also an agent replicating and reconstituting the relations of society (e.g. Bourdieu 1977, Giddens 1985). Language is not, however, limited to what is spoken or what is written, but can be extended by metaphor to the whole of material existence, which in its past tense is the province of archaeology. Thus the material world, whether buildings, fields, or pottery,

forces patterns of repetition which are locked into systems of social order and power, but at the same time can, like language itself, subvert and change the direction of society, through such acts as technological innovation or symbolic readjustment. Material of the past recovered by the archaeological methodology, therefore, can no longer, in theoretical terms, be regarded solely as the inert products of lost social and economic processes, as in the terms of New Archaeology, but can be seen as texts in their own right, describing, if correctly read and properly translated into verbal language, as well as involving, the past discourse of power.

The common ground of both these issues is, therefore, the dynamic of power: that is, the organization of social means to social ends constituted through time. In this there is a challenge for medieval archaeologists, and an opportunity. Instead of piling, pointlessly, empirical Ossa upon positivist Pelion in the vain hope that the accumulated mass of archaeological data will somehow speak for itself, we should attempt to analyse what material existence itself actually meant in the Middle Ages. Meaning will come from understanding its language and its involvement in the praxis of day-to-day living, in the structure of social ordering and in the processes of change in the interstices and on the periphery of medieval systems. The objective is to try and find a way of telling the archaeological story of the Middle Ages in such a way as to avoid the crippling effect of the documentary agenda with its often limited and particularistic view of the past. What, in these circumstances, happens to the relationship with history? If history is defined simply as the understanding of the past through the medium of the present, the interpretation of both the archaeology and the document must be seen as equal and potentially opposing elements in the dialectical process of knowledge. In such terms we might share a common practice of history. If medieval historians, however, continue to assert the dominance of the word over the material, and if they continue to use history as a prop to the present institutional arrangements of power, then we should not bother with the dialogue and we can leave them bricked up by their own hand in their own ivory towers.

### Elements of a shared practice of history

Here we return to my second point: whether we share the practice of history with the interpreters of documents or whether we write our own text independently, there must still be an historical agenda. This, of course, is a massive subject and it might be best here to identify two potential items for the agenda which relate to modern political and philosophical concerns. By these means we come, of course, full circle, because we predicate once again on the assumption that historical study can never be objective nor detached from our contemporary need for a kind of history which justifies what we are or what we wish to be. We embrace this not as a matter of guilt but as a recognition of our true role.

First, let us re-examine ethnicity and the role of the nation state in Europe. I began this chapter by portraying a special role for medieval archaeology in perpetuating the myths of ethnic identity so essential to the consciousness of modern nationality. Yet we live at a time when such tightly bounded ideas and organizations are being deeply questioned throughout Europe. The Delors plan, for example, raises the distinct possibility of a more federated European Community. In essence this advocates a stronger pan-European political organization, operating social and economic policy on a regional rather than national basis. This can be achieved, of course, only at the cost of weakened politics for the states presently constituted as sovereign nations. Arguably capitalism itself in the widening net of the world economy has already succeeded in doing this, long ago extending its power networks beyond the reach of national governments. Medieval and early modern history has been microscopically examined in a vast literature to detect the roots and determinations of both nationalism and capitalism, often with the aim of defining them both as progressive and therefore somehow natural in the social systems of power in Western Europe. To this end the reaffirmation of national ethnic identities through material culture, often medieval, in the care of national museums and state archaeological services, has been essential, because it appears, however subtly, to sanctify the spatial territory and aspirations of nation states. At best such ethnic jingoism is patriotic, at worst it lends a spurious legitimacy to racism and xenophobia.

Yet a glance at any distribution map of material cultural types in Europe throughout the Middle Ages (and into the modern period, where such things have been studied) shows that these simple certainties were patently not the case. Europe has always, in historical periods, been a shifting interplay of regions, whether organized on the basis of economic power, in the case of market and city networks, or on political or military systems, such as tribes or feudal baronies. To argue that present nations, originally constituted as politically effective regions in the contexts of their times, should be preserved in perpetuity is to argue against the movement of history. Medieval material culture, as well as modern, also clearly underlines strong transcontinental affinities. This may be in the form of medieval architectural traditions, long recognized, but it may also be in the sudden appearance of sunken-floored buildings across the whole of northern Europe in the Dark Ages, long ignored or submerged in the emphasis of difference which distinguishes eastern Slavs from western Germans. Sociospatial study and representation of the material cultural regions of medieval Europe in the context of a pan-European ideology and organization, such as Christianity has been, could be one of the legitimate objectives, not just of an academic medieval archaeology but also of a transnational Museum of Europe and a European Archaeological Service. If this were also on the Delors agenda for Brussels, it would serve the twin aims of underpinning federal regionalism and providing a political history and focus for regional aspirations now masquerading as nationalisms, such as those of Wales, Scotland, or the Basque country, and even, in the wider and longer

view, those of Serbia or Lithuania. This would be an effective and visual counterblast to nationalism.

Such a subject for the historical agenda might, without due care, tend to emphasize the continued primacy of Europe, at least for those people with their homes in Europe. The exploration of de-nationalizing ideas of regionalism through time in the One World might, in fact, help the struggle to escape the long legacy of Europe. This has been traditionally constituted as resistance against domination, whether it be the dangerous death spasms of colonialism in South Africa or the insidious spread of the world system through commerce and the World Bank. The dreadful consequences in Third World warfare, famine, folk migrations, and other forms of dislocation in the postcolonial structures are all too apparent even to the comfortable Western liberal. Struggle has often seemed the only force of opposition to such creeping yet devastating changes which destabilize, demoralize, and ultimately alter for ever, or even destroy, the regional cultures of the world. It seems ironic that we should seek to enhance the regions of Europe yet condone their destruction elsewhere in the world. Now, however, the Western world has begun to realize that it can no longer force the Third World alone to pay for the consequences of its relentless development. There is a global political issue which offers to transcend the seemingly unstoppable power of First World economic growth: the environment. And this brings us to the second subject.

We may see the space around us as natural resource or we may see it as a context for living. Each is an ideological position. The difference is that the former has, of recent years, tended to emphasize the modes of production and the systems of redistributing its wealth, while the latter has stressed both the finiteness of the resource and our responsibilities in the ecosystem. Although we might facetiously characterize the former as unrestrained rapaciousness founded on powerful new technologies, we might describe the latter as an extensive form of asceticism, either constantly affirming what we should not do or withdrawing into a private world of self-sufficiency, a modern monasticism without the celibacy. Indeed, the analogy with the medieval monk is telling, because his asceticism and self-sufficiency were financially supported by the very processes of humanity that he sought to escape and deny. We are not concerned here with resolving what ultimately must be a political issue on the global scale, but it is clear that solutions to this problem must involve harmonizing our social organizations at least approximately with the rapidly developing potentials of technology and the needs of the natural system. In this there must be an historical perspective, if only because, on the one hand, we in the Western world constantly seek to legitimate our material greed in terms of progress – a notion that includes the assumption of improvement in the human condition – and on the other hand, we raid the past for images of the self-sufficient idyll. Neither is wholly supportable and the compromise between the two positions has been, throughout time, a rolling programme in which mistakes have been made and people, and places, have suffered.

Archaeology is well suited, for reasons given above, to present the history of ecology in its relationship with changing human conditions and organizations. For the Middle Ages in particular we would argue that we need to examine in considerable detail the way in which communities of the past balanced their material needs against the necessity to preserve the renewable and finite resources of their piece of the earth. For this we need to develop the techniques and scope of landscape history, being careful to pull it away from narrowly parochial paths. Landscapes are the physical representation of humanity's success or failure in reaching accommodation with nature, as well as being a metaphor, like other aspects of material culture, for social power relations and structures of belief.

Two dimensions to extending our understanding landscape in this sense can appear on the historical agenda as methodological procedure. The first is intensive: concentration on specific blocks of landscape by documentary and archaeological historians, prehistorians, human geographers, and natural scientists can record the microprocesses of social and ecological interrelationships. This must, however, be produced by the active cooperation of all within research objectives unified by clear theoretical procedures and targets, not, as we now have too frequently, by the mechanical accretion of unintegrated blocks of data, often at the back of excavation reports. Also, we should study the total space of communities, not merely their settlements. The second is extensive: comparison on a worldwide basis of the trajectories of different social groups in different types of environment, studied through similar methodologies, can document the regional and cultural basis for different styles of managing nature. Such comparisons may be employed in the defence of the rights of individual communities to determine their own accommodation with their own natural space. For example, the clearance of the European climax woodlands was achieved by the people living in their small communities over long periods of time. In the process not all was cleared and, until the advent of capitalism and nation states building navies, much was retained as managed resource. The decisions and pressures to do so were complex and still need understanding, but essentially a high degree of self-determination and plain self-interest by communities rather than powerful and remote individuals kept an equilibrium in the biomass. By comparison, the clearance of the world's rainforests has involved the denial of these rights to *in situ* communities. However, the ultimate rape of our managed woodland in Europe by our formative nation states, in the name of our material progress, appears to make it historically and morally difficult for our modern national governments to deny others this same progress, especially when the world system is urging them to develop as quickly as possible. We can as archaeological historians, however, point out that the process by which we in Europe undertook the bulk of our clearance in the landscapes of prehistory and the Middle Ages was slower and in accordance with the aspirations not of nation states and world systems but of local communities, responding in their own ways to external stimuli and pressures. There are messages here for the First and Third Worlds alike, and such would

seem to be at least one proper subject of debate for future archaeological historians.

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## 2 The 'proper study' of medieval archaeology: a case study

DAVID AUSTIN & JULIAN THOMAS

### Introduction

What has emerged in Chapter 1 (Austin, this volume) is a critique and a criticism of the relationship between archaeological and documentary history. What was not said there is that medieval archaeology, in its attempt to support and infill the text of documentary history, has lost faith in its ability to do so, a crisis of confidence in the capacity of the evidence to sustain historical explanation. This is due in part, as was indicated, to the pursuit of a language and grammar institutionally distanced from the very nature of material culture, and in part to the general reductionism, amounting to pessimistic minimalism, prevalent in archaeology generally as an inheritance of the processual schools. This general position is breaking up, since, as Tilley (1988) rightly points out, the real 'epistemological break' came not with the New Archaeology of the 1960s but with the developments of the present decade. Instead of functional and adaptive roles, a number of writers have recently stressed the status of material culture as a technology of signification, a medium of transmitting its own messages of history (e.g. Hodder 1982, Barrett 1988, Tilley 1988).

What we would like to explore here, through a piece of empirical reinterpretation, is what this might mean for medieval archaeology. In the end, what we want to suggest is that the consequent shift in the potential of archaeological evidence presents medieval archaeologists with the opportunity of emancipating themselves from the position of being mere auxiliaries to history and promoting themselves to being front-line troops. There is, however, a price to be paid for this. First, we must abandon the pretence of being documentary historians *manqué* – we must listen to what the material really has to say and then present it, if necessary, as a parallel text to the document and its interpretation. It follows that we must drop the requirement for our medieval archaeologists to be well versed in the methodologies and data of documentary history. Rather, we must see the active engagement of medieval archaeologists in the deployment and development of archaeological and social theory. In this way, the recent changes in archaeological thinking are potentially revolutionary for the relationship between the two taught disciplines of history and archaeology, separated by material and method but not necessarily by ultimate objective. In this chapter we will first outline the main aspects of the new thinking and then put it into operation on one set of

data familiar to us, with a view to reassessing the relationship between history and archaeology.

### Material culture and signification

Everyone will believe what they do over and over again . . . (*The Marat/Sade*, Peter Weiss, 1964)

In Britain much of the philosophical focus of archaeology has shifted towards social and critical theory, under the strong influence of French, German, and British poststructural thinking. This has led, in one sector of the archaeological intelligentsia, to the announcement of a school of 'postprocessual archaeology', essentially among prehistorians (Hodder 1985). Despite the proclamation, however, it would still be difficult to find a common set of beliefs uniting the school's various practitioners, and it might be easier in the first instance to define in negative terms, not so much by what it is as by what it is not. In most cases, this would involve the rejection of many of the grosser assumptions and postures of New Archaeology: positivism, naturalism, evolutionism, the framing of universal laws of human behaviour, a faith in the hypothetico-deductive method, and a stress on the scientific objectivity of the archaeologist (Shanks & Tilley 1987a, Ch. 2). None the less, an acceptance that material culture must be problematized is generally high on the agenda of those who reject the reductionist positions of the past generation.

As Patrik (1985) indicates, one of the fundamental contrasts between these two schools of thought lies in the way in which they think about the archaeological record itself. For the New Archaeologists the record was a physical one, the analogue of the fossil record of animal evolution. In recent years this model has been superseded by a textual one. The analogue is now the oral language of social existence, rendered as written text. Thus archaeology provides a record of discourse, social interaction, and negotiation which has been submitted to inscription by the process of physical deposition and which can be 'read' by the archaeologist. Yet, as Barrett (1988, p. 6) points out, the very term 'record' is imperfect as a metaphor since it relegates the evidence to a passive state and neglects the facts that material things of the past were directly involved in social discourse and that, like the written text itself, through the process of reading they continue to be involved with the present.

Essentially, therefore, in the postprocessual position, archaeological materials and deposits are textual evidence. This was derived as a consequence of ethnographic fieldwork, in which a number of workers came to the unavoidable conclusion that material things, in addition to mere function, have a meaning content and convey messages (e.g. Braithwaite 1982, Hodder 1982, Moore 1986). Moreover, it was recognized that these meanings were constructed, manipulated, and changed in the negotiation of social position. As texts, however, material things have, of themselves, no intrinsic meaning (Miller 1982). Literary theorists, for example, have been at pains to point out

that language is arbitrary in the way that it creates meaning: there is no essential relationship between the signifier and the signified. The signified is always absent (Derrida 1986, p. 404). It follows that although material objects may convey meanings to people, there is nothing in the object *qua* object which allows the same meaning to be elicited by the archaeologist, any more than we can read a translation of a foreign religious text and hope to comprehend every nuance of meaning without knowing the frame of reference. In other words, the 'reading' of material culture by the native depends upon a certain 'tradition of interpretation', determined by habitual understanding (Warnke 1987). Thus reading a text (material or written) requires an active engagement in the creation of meaning: one reads meaning *into* a text not *out of* it.

Because material culture can in this way be used to express identity and comment on society, and because it forms the settings and contexts for social action, it cannot be seen as a passive reflection of some more 'real' aspect of society. People make things and draw on them in social discourse, with the result that a dialectic exists between subjectivity and materiality. This process continually brings society into being (Barrett 1988, p. 7, Hodder 1986, p. 6). Such a view of existence is perhaps best expressed by Bourdieu (1977), in his discussion of what he called the *habitus*. It is a potentially forceful observation that people tend to create the material world around them in accordance with templates and rules held in their heads. Yet, as Bourdieu points out, if we were to accept a classic structuralist or even Neo-Platonist point of view, these rules would be only transformations of eternal, pan-human, cognitive structures. Such a view tends to deny that history can happen, in the sense of real, nonreversible change, and equally it makes individual people powerless to alter the material conditions under which they live. Bourdieu replaces the glacial eternal structures of Lévi-Strauss with the *habitus*: 'the durably installed generative principle of regulated improvisations . . . [an] immanent inner law . . . laid down inside each agent by his earliest upbringing' (Bourdieu 1977, pp. 78, 81). By this, Bourdieu means that people tend to act habitually in accord with a set of values and codes which they internalize subconsciously in their early life. *Habitus* is not fixed, but shifts from one generation to the next or from one class to another, in accord with the different material conditions which people experience. *Habitus* does not determine action but merely guides it. Specifically, it will be the routine, day-to-day acts which will be patterned, while strategic acts may change the objective conditions under which the subject operates. Once again, then, we have a dialectical relationship between objective conditions and subjectivity.

One of the fundamental effects of the orchestration of *habitus* is the production of a commonsense world endowed with the objectivity secured by consensus on the meaning of practices and the world. (Bourdieu 1977, p. 80)

The effect of the inculcation of the *habitus* is thus that practices and traditions tend to be reproduced from one generation to the next, since 'the way of doing things' gains the status of common sense.



The significance of Bourdieu's account is, therefore, that it allows some active role for the human subject in history, while still being able to explain why social reality does not dissolve into formless chaos. For the archaeologist, the most vital part of this vision is the central role afforded to material things and mundane practices in installing and reproducing the *habitus*. It is in the context of the home and the hearth that people will internalize the most fundamental values and structures that will guide their future lives. Bourdieu presents, as a guide to this principle, a study of the interior layout of Kabyle houses in Algeria, in which space is constructed as a kind of map of social experience:

The house is organised according to a set of homologous oppositions – fire: water :: raw: cooked :: high: low :: light: shade :: day: night :: male: female :: fertilising: able to be fertilised . . . all the actions performed in a space constructed in this way are immediately qualified symbolically and function as so many structural exercises through which is built up practical mastery of the fundamental schemes. (Bourdieu 1977, pp. 90–91)

Simply by inhabiting the space of the house, and in the course of carrying out their day-to-day activities, people habitually and constantly internalize the generative schemes of Kabyle culture. Such generative schemes are, of course, always historically and culturally relative. Material culture, in the form both of architecture and of portable artefacts, is routinely read by people and contributes to the formation of their subjectivity. Through its very materiality and permanence, material culture may thus contribute directly to social reproduction (Miller 1987, p. 99), in the way that it may embody and re-present traditional virtues and values. The special significance of portable artefacts lies in the way in which they may be deployed, orchestrated, and brought together to create new contexts of meaning. Just as much as architecture, this may help to create a context for discourse, defining what can and cannot (and what need and need not) be said. In our own society the presence of a policeman's uniform, for instance, or a church lectern or the parliamentary mace will alert us to the kind of discourse which is appropriate to a given setting.

As well as 'framing' discourse in this way, material things can be used to transmit messages in a more active way. Thus Braithwaite (1982) discusses the way in which the decoration of Azande pottery serves to transmit messages concerning potential pollution and defilement involved in domestic transactions between men and women. This is explicitly related to what Bourdieu (1977, p. 169) calls *doxa*, the realm of the undiscussed. It follows from this that the spectrum of the ways in which a society expresses itself extends beyond the verbal, and that material things may sometimes bear the burden of 'saying' what cannot be spoken. Objects can euphemize statements which would be considered inappropriate, reminding people that there are always limits to discourse which cannot be transgressed. Equally, as Hodder indicates (1982,

p. 73), material things can be used in a covert way by subservient groups to express their solidarity. In some circumstances this same strategy can be used to convey an open challenge to authority: one need think only of the ribbons, dolls, and other items tied by women antinuclear protesters to the fences of Greenham Common airbase to demonstrate the poignancy of such a statement within our own milieu.

These observations, we hope, serve to demonstrate that a fundamental shift has occurred in the archaeological conceptualization of material culture. None of what we have presented is by now particularly revolutionary; where we hope to make some original contribution is in considering the implications of this body of ideas for the status of archaeology in historic periods. However, before we proceed to that stage of the discussion, a further point has to be made. If archaeology has gained any interpretative weight over the past decade, this can be attributed to a growing willingness to take seriously the insights into human organization which have been achieved in the social sciences in general. It follows that if we are to construct an archaeology which is both relevant and able to produce interpretations that will be accepted outside the confines of our own discipline, we must cast off the traditional archaeological emphasis on data collection for its own sake. If we are to contribute to the broader realm of cultural studies, rather than being mere parasites of our fellow disciplines, we must become social scientists.

## Archaeology and history

How and why has it been possible for medieval historians to systematically ignore the work of medieval archaeologists? In a relatively recent and comparatively liberal introduction to the methodologies of history, John Tosh declares:

One has only to read an account of a society for which no written records exist – for example Iron Age Britain or Medieval Zimbabwe – to see how lacking in human vitality history can be when denied its principal source material. (1984, p. 28)

There are really two criticisms of archaeology contained in this statement. One of them is wholly justified; the other entirely objectionable. The first point which Tosh makes is essentially that archaeology is boring. History is about people, but archaeology is about castles, houses, field systems, and objects. As a result, archaeological writing appears to the historian irredeemably dull. This is probably a fair appraisal of the way in which archaeology has been written in the past, yet it should in no way be seen as indicative of any essential limitation on archaeological discourse. Archaeologists often seem to accept that since they cannot dig up a society, they should feel bound to avoid discussion of any such entity. We feel that it is essential that archaeologists accept a *realist* position in this respect (Shanks & Tilley 1987a, p. 112): the

observable was generated by the unobservable, hence it is necessary to posit the reality of the latter. We simply cannot hope to discuss castles, houses, and artefacts adequately without considering their creation by (and consequently their role in the creation of) human subjects. *People* inhabited these spaces, made and used these items; it is time to put them back into the picture. This is not to say that, having accepted this element of Tosh's critique, we should throw ourselves to the opposite extreme, that of the 'Great Man' school of history. By making history about kings and queens or about great statesmen, one does no more than turn human subjects into objects, divorced from their context.

The second aspect of Tosh's criticism is the implicit acceptance that the written record represents the 'principal source material' of history, and hence the sovereign road to an understanding of the past (see Austin, Ch. 1, this volume). Sad to say, archaeologists themselves have often done much to bolster this point of view. Thus Lewis Binford suggests that where written sources exist, they can constitute 'an experimental control' on observations made archaeologically:

So long as we have historical documents which preserve observations, made by people actually present, about the dynamics of places in the past, we have the option of excavating these places and, walking through history, as it were, alongside an historical character, trying to relate what we find in the ground to what he reports as having occurred there. (Binford 1983, pp. 25–6)

It seems frankly astonishing that someone like Binford, who has done as much as anyone to alert us to the character and limitations of the archaeological record from a taphonomic point of view, should display such naivety with respect to written sources. It seems here as if Binford accepts written records as unproblematic, and archaeology as necessarily secondary in consequence of its flawed and partial character. Few historians, one suspects, would share his optimism. As Tosh suggests, 'However spontaneous or authoritative the source, very few forms of writing arise solely from a desire to convey the unvarnished truth' (1984, p. 55).

The awareness on the part of historians of this problem ranges from a liberal concern with 'bias', via the Marxist absorption with ideology, to the whole hermeneutic tradition within German historiography (Collingwood 1961, Warnke 1987, Ch. 1). There is a certain irony in the fact that it is precisely the ideas which make us aware of the potential of archaeological evidence which must also make us most wary of the written word. Related to Binford's denigration of archaeological evidence is a hostility on the part of some archaeologists to the idea of history as a mode of explanation. David Clarke, for instance, railed against archaeologists who used their data in order to write 'counterfeit history':

Archaeological data are not historical data and consequently archaeology is not history ... the danger of historical narrative as a vehicle for

archaeological results is that it pleases by virtue of its smooth coverage and apparent finality, whilst the data on which it is based are never comprehensive, never capable of supporting but one interpretation and rest on complex probabilities. (1978, p. 11)

If anything, this quotation must leave us even more incredulous than Binford's. Narrative as a means of imparting information is almost unavoidable when we attempt to convey change in human relations across time (Roth 1988). The narrative form allows us to 'follow the story' (Ricoeur 1981, p. 278). It is hard to imagine what else Clarke himself is doing, other than constructing a narrative, when in his work on Beaker pottery in Britain he writes:

After this initial century of primary Beaker settlement and Neolithic reaction, there appears to be a slackening in continental Beaker influence reaching Britain, although probably never a complete cessation. Then, in the century between 1800–1700 BC no less than five continental Beaker groups land, in quick succession, along the entire length of the eastern British seaboard. (Clarke 1970, p. 274)

In his own practice, then, Clarke tacitly acknowledged that as archaeologists we can make sense of our evidence only by writing in a narrative form. Given a set of evidence, we fill in the gaps, interpreting as we go, and 'tell a story' (Shanks & Tilley 1987a, p. 21). In this there is no logical distinction between what archaeologists and historians 'do'. As to the proposition that archaeological data can never support only one interpretation, this can hardly be taken as a reason for distinguishing between the two disciplines: surely no historian would ever suggest that they had 'proved' the incontrovertible 'truth' about a particular sequence of events? Similarly, the seeming finality of some historical accounts should not be taken as a reason for abandoning history. It is precisely this form of history which Foucault (1984, p. 87) decries when he attacks 'the Historian's history', written from a position of apocalyptic objectivity, as if we were not ourselves historical beings. The kind of history which archaeologists *could* write could be based on the model which Foucault proposes: a 'genealogical' history, a history of the practices and technologies which create the human subject (Thomas in press). Such an approach also counters Binford's earlier criticism (1972, p. 116) that 'historical' explanations have to proceed by making assumptions about how people will behave on the basis of implicit laws of human nature. By definition, the kind of history envisaged is one which considers no aspect of human culture to be 'fundamental' or static. Everything in the human condition, and human nature itself, exists 'in history' and must be investigated with a view to demonstrating its historical contingency. Binford's insistence that there *are* laws of human behaviour to be found seems infinitely conservative by comparison.

The most telling problem with Clarke's insistence that 'archaeology is

archaeology is archaeology' is that he is conflating two senses of the word 'history'. In one sense history is an academic discipline which concerns itself with the interpretation of written texts. But it is presumably not this to which Marx alluded when he wrote in 1855 that:

men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past. (1968, p. 96)

In this sense, history is the process of social life (Ingold 1986, p. 75) and bears no relation to a written record. The claim that archaeologists can *write history*, we suggest, must be evaluated in terms of the second of these definitions, rather than the first.

In this context it becomes clearer precisely why the 'textual' view of archaeology so dramatically alters its relationship to history. The lesson of recent archaeological theory is that a society expresses itself in many ways; the written word is only one of these. History (with a capital 'H') consists in the totality of all subjective experience and processes of subjectification and objectification. There is no way in which these can be apprehended fully through written documents alone. Indeed, although we would argue that a complete understanding of any event is a practical impossibility, a closer approach to completeness will come from the consideration of both written and material text. Not only is there no ontological distinction to be drawn between them (both convey meanings, both are entirely arbitrary in their significance, both require an act of interpretation to elicit their meaning), but the two may also refer to different aspects and levels of past human experience. It may be for archaeologists, therefore, to write the history of the taken for granted and the unspoken (or unspeakable). This is made blindingly clear by work like Foucault's discussion of 18th-century secondary schools in France:

On the whole, one can have the impression that sex was hardly spoken of at all in these institutions. But one has only to glance at the architectural layout, the rules of discipline, and their whole internal organisation: the question of sex was a constant preoccupation. The builders considered it explicitly. The organisers took it permanently into account ... The space for classes, the shape of the tables ... the distribution of the dormitories (with or without partitions, with or without curtains) ... all this referred, in the most prolix way, to the sexuality of children. (1979, p. 27)

Is this account less 'real' or 'immediate' than the one which would be obtained from documents? Is there less 'human vitality' here? If archaeologists are prepared to consider their evidence in these ways, it may become less easy for historians to ignore their efforts.

The question which this begs is what scope exists for integration between the two approaches. Logically, even the most complete of archaeological data

bases and the most enviable documentation cannot between them give total access to a past social reality. Both require an interpretative act to rationalize them, to transform them into a narrative written in the present. What has to be asked is whether the two forms of evidence can be combined in the *same* narrative, or whether the documentary and the archaeological historian are dealing with material which relates to such separate concerns that they must construct their narratives as 'parallel texts'. This was the dilemma raised by Austin (Ch. 1, this volume). In a sense it is merely a procedural question, since we recognize that the ultimate goal is a debate about the same reality. What is argued here is that to make explicit the different messages and assumptions about the same social phenomena, we must first read and translate the archaeological text in its own terms and then place it in parallel or as a dialectic with texts from other sources, arguing towards a furtherance of historical understanding. This is no more than saying that the events and conditions of medieval society would be described differently by a knight, a peasant, and a nun. Archaeology merely offers another viewpoint, if not many others. By definition such viewpoints are not recoverable from other sources of data, but are none the less just as valid.

### Time and space as a framework for analysis

Constructing a relevant and viable archaeology depends as much as anything upon the questions which we choose to ask of archaeological evidence. This evidence does have certain advantages of its own: the archaeologist has a degree of control over both time and space that might be envied by other disciplines. This is particularly the case when one considers that recent developments in social theory have laid much stress on the temporality and spacing of social action. Time and space are not merely environments or backdrops to human existence; they form a matrix through which social life is threaded (Giddens 1979, p. 202, 1984, p. 110). The kinds of questions which archaeologists can legitimately ask might thus relate to the ways in which different societies are constituted and reproduced through space and time. This would involve consideration of how practices, traditions, and human subjects were generated and reproduced. Necessarily, this would require a rejection of the kind of objectivism which concentrates exclusively on the 'real' material conditions of human existence. What is important is not a 'scientific' grasp of such conditions, but an understanding of how they contributed to the formation of subjectivity. As Collingwood rightly indicated, 'The fact that certain people live, for example, on an island, has no effect on their history; what has an effect is how they conceive that insular position' (1961, p. 200).

Two distinct but interrelated strands of social theory will be of use to us in integrating time and space into an archaeological analysis. The first of these comes from the meeting of Hagerstrand's 'time geography' and Giddens's 'theory of structuration' (Pred 1977, Giddens 1984), and the second is the



blend of poststructuralism and hermeneutics which is developing in contemporary archaeological theory (e.g. Moore 1986, Hodder 1986, Shanks & Tilley 1987a, 1987b).

Time geography is essentially concerned with the way in which the movements of persons in space, mapped out through time, allow them to have access to particular spatial domains and to achieve copresence with other persons. This may take the form of an interest in how different modes of material production result in particular ways of 'budgeting' time-space resources (Carlstein 1981), but rather more interesting is Giddens's appropriation of the epistemology in order to investigate how communities are integrated and reproduced. In preindustrial societies, for example, it is suggested that the integration of social systems is achieved through the medium of routine face-to-face interactions between copresent agents (Giddens 1981). The stress on routine and habitual actions as a means of reproducing 'traditional' ways of life leads to an interest in the way in which the experience of space structures the consciousness of the individual. This results in a set of concerns very similar to those shown by Bourdieu in the Kabyle house study. But as well as seeing architecture as a cultural template which serves to inculcate generative structures into the subject, Giddens stresses the role of locales as settings for encounters (1987, p. 120).

These approaches, then, are concerned with the *structure* of human action in time and space: how people meet, part, exchange, labour, and communicate. It may be that this should be augmented with a concern with content and meaning: with how space is experienced and interpreted. Generally, this involves the concept of text, which has already been considered. The landscape is thus looked on as analogous to a text: something which is inscribed and interpreted through human activity. The act of moving bodily through space is seen as the equivalent of reading, eliciting a meaning in accordance with a habituated tradition of interpretation (Moore 1986, p. 78). No space, however 'natural', is ever seen objectively, but is always preinterpreted (Duncan & Duncan 1988). In the case of constructed space, meanings will become attributed to particular loci through the practice of living and moving in space, but these meanings will still be arbitrary and conventional.

In addition both space and time will have different orders of magnitude, different horizons which also shape the social being and the social consciousness. Just as a particular locus will generate different responses in different individuals, so different individuals will operate through spaces and times which vary with position, experience, and life cycle. Societies consist of interlocking networks of such microcosms in a confederal rather than a unitary way (Mann 1986, p. 16). Thus in a medieval society the lord's view of *his* space may be dominated by his castles and manor houses, the administration of his estate, the practice of justice, the availability of hunting, and the scope of contemporary warfare, while for the peasant his house, plough land, pasture, church, and market may be the unwavering *loca* of his social activity. Similarly, through time, such universes may contract or expand, but within certain repetitive formats. Giddens (1981, pp. 19–20) proposes this in three

interlocking planes of time: first, the *durée* of day-by-day existence; second, the *dasein* of the human being's life space; and third, the *longue durée* of institutional time. Thus the landscape text of space must be considered through a variety of eyes and to the measure of different rhythms.

If we take these approaches together, it is clear that what Pred (1977) calls the 'weaving dance' of people moving in time-space is equally a hermeneutic activity. As people move, they are constantly 'reading' their surroundings and interpreting them. As Duncan & Duncan (1988) point out, if this reading is inattentive, the process may serve to naturalize certain common-sense notions about 'how the world is'. Just as Bourdieu suggests with the internalization of the *habitus*, this 'choreography of existence' is the process through which the human subject takes form. As archaeologists, the materials which we excavate and survey have direct bearing on this process: these were the locales which oriented people's movements, the material texts which they read. Archaeology provides us with evidence of technologies through which people made themselves into subjects, distributed spatially and temporally. It is for us to provide adequate interpretations of these technologies.

### The case study

The case study derives from published fieldwork and excavations in a complex of medieval farms and field systems in Okehampton Park (Austin 1978, Austin *et al.* 1980). The fieldwork recorded a network of broadly contemporary earthworks, while excavation was concentrated on seven buildings and related features within a single farmyard. Okehampton Park lies on the northern edge of Dartmoor, an extensive upland tract of country which today consists of rough heathland vegetation and peat. The granitic mass of Dartmoor dominates this part of southwestern England and is visible for many miles from the ancient bocage landscapes and scattered settlements of north Devon. This remarkable group of earthworks, the remains of a 12th- and 13th-century landscape, has been discussed extensively elsewhere in terms of historical geography and economic history (Austin 1978, Austin *et al.* 1980, Austin 1985). Indeed, the approach was a classic example of the subservience of archaeological interpretation to the agenda set by documentary history. The stress was on the landscape as an example of exploitation on the margin of the medieval rural economy, where the systems and modes of production found in the lowlands to the north were pushed to the limits of viability at over 350 metres above sea level. Much was also made of the fact that *one* interpretation of *one* document allowed us to speculate that this piece of landscape has been an area 'in demesne' – that is, under the direct control of the lord, in this case the Earl of Devon. The peasant occupants of the buildings surveyed and excavated could thus be characterized in generic terms derived from documents elsewhere in contemporary England. These were, then, semiservile tenants 'at the will of their lord', producing agricultural goods by their own direct labour on the lord's land. The very sparse documentation was

also milked to provide functional interpretations of certain bits of the relic landscape, such as woodland, common pastures, and forest (royal hunting reserve). In all, therefore, a framework of discussion existed and the archaeological information was raided to provide evidence which could be used to further the objectives and problems of the documentary agenda. What is proposed here is that we return to the archaeology and read it primarily as archaeological historians.

The structure of the text is woven around space, as shown on six plans. This is necessarily limiting: they are two-dimensional and space is three-dimensional; they take no account of the portable artefacts found on the site, since discussion of their significance would need to be prefaced by debate about the processes of deposition; finally, they appear to represent a 'contemporary' landscape, but this can be asserted only generally from field observation, since detailed excavation and dating of all elements shown have not been carried out. What is attempted through the six drawings is a structured transition through the spaces of the peasant's social experience, widening out from the house to what might be his or her total physical context. This will involve different levels and qualities of inference as well as different types of evidence. For example, the first three figures are derived extensively from excavation, the fourth and fifth from aerial photography and fieldwork, and the final one from that curious amalgam of archaeology, historical geography, documents, and place names that constitutes the British topographical tradition of landscape history. Indeed, Figure 2.6 presents the ultimate dilemma, as we shall see, because to arrive at this world-view we must assume the limits of the peasant sphere of activity, and this is predicated on what we know of it from documents. This picture, unachievable in prehistory, cannot be built from archaeological information alone and is, therefore, of itself, a piece of unified history, not – and here is the paradox – an archaeological text, despite being solely a representation of the material past.

### Interpreting the buildings

I preserve the fire as Christ preserves all. Brigid at the two ends of the house, and Mary in the centre. The three angels and the three apostles who are highest in the Kingdom of Grace, guarding this house and its contents until day.

This was Peig Sayers's prayer as she poured the protective ashes over the peat embers, recited before the audience of relations and neighbours on Great Blasket Island who had come to the space before her, in her seat before the hearth, to hear the stories of the past told in the oral traditions of western Ireland (Sayers 1962, p. xiv). Her house had a spiritual format and the places within it had meanings, known to her and shared by her neighbours. Such meanings filled the domestic space and informed the face-to-face encounters within the daily round through the patterns of the seasons and the rhythms of life.

These things are well known to field archaeologists and ethnographers in conversation with their subjects (e.g. Glassie 1982), but of what relevance has this to the mute stillness of archaeological evidence? Douglas (1972) provided a telling critique of archaeological approaches which concentrate exclusively on geographical or technical factors to interpret domestic spatial organization. Her prognosis for the recoverability of the symbolic orders which underlie domestic architecture was, however, a gloomy one, but we prefer to maintain an air of guarded optimism. Our simple contention is that the organization of space within the buildings excavated in Okehampton Park was deliberate, structured, and familiar to the occupants, that it was involved in the pattern of daily existence, and thus that it has something to tell us of that pattern.

The first thing to be demonstrated, repetition, is the bread and butter of archaeology: it is in essence typology. Figure 2.1 shows the plans of six long-houses and three short longhouses (see Austin 1985 for typological terms) excavated on Dartmoor. Essentially these are dry-stone constructions of the very late 12th to later 14th centuries, reflecting 150–200 years of continuous use. The drawings isolate and stylize a number of characteristics found within these buildings, but a caveat must be issued: for sites other than Okehampton Park it is difficult to know whether certain features, notably stakeholes, were truly absent from the internal arrangements, since they have been wrongly ascribed to earlier structures. This problem has been highlighted by question marks in the relevant positions, and it illustrates the point that the archaeological text, like the document, needs skills in palaeography and diplomacy. What it also illustrates is that previous interest in these buildings concentrated on their technology and function, things of particular concern to the economic historian. Consequently much less care was taken with the details of 'minor' internal organization. In fact, it is these details which carry us forward as archaeologists.

It has long been noted how similar these structures are, but what has been stressed is their linear arrangement beneath the one ridge pole, the provision of byre for animals, cross-passage between opposed doors, living room with hearth and small back room. Here on Dartmoor the similarity goes further to become repetition. The byre drains are central and spinal, they are flanked by rows of stakes along the outside walls, and the byres lie down the slope from the upper rooms. The outer doors lie opposite each other and mark the change from human to animal spaces, but without evidence of any physical barrier at the cross-passage, something which arrives only with the 15th- and 16th-century versions of the Dartmoor longhouse. Careful consideration of the doors, the points of transition, shows that usually one is given different treatment to the other: one is, in other words, enhanced. At Houndtor 1, houses 3 and 7, at Hutholes 1, house 3, and at Okehampton Park, B2, the enhancement is by the foundations for external porches and the provision of sockets for door pivots or frames. At Okehampton Park, A1, there is a threshold stone and only at Dinna Clerks is there no detectable difference. In addition, as we shall see, at Okehampton Park the enhanced doors lead to the outer yard and the others to the inner yards, a pattern also repeated at Houndtor 1 and Hutholes.

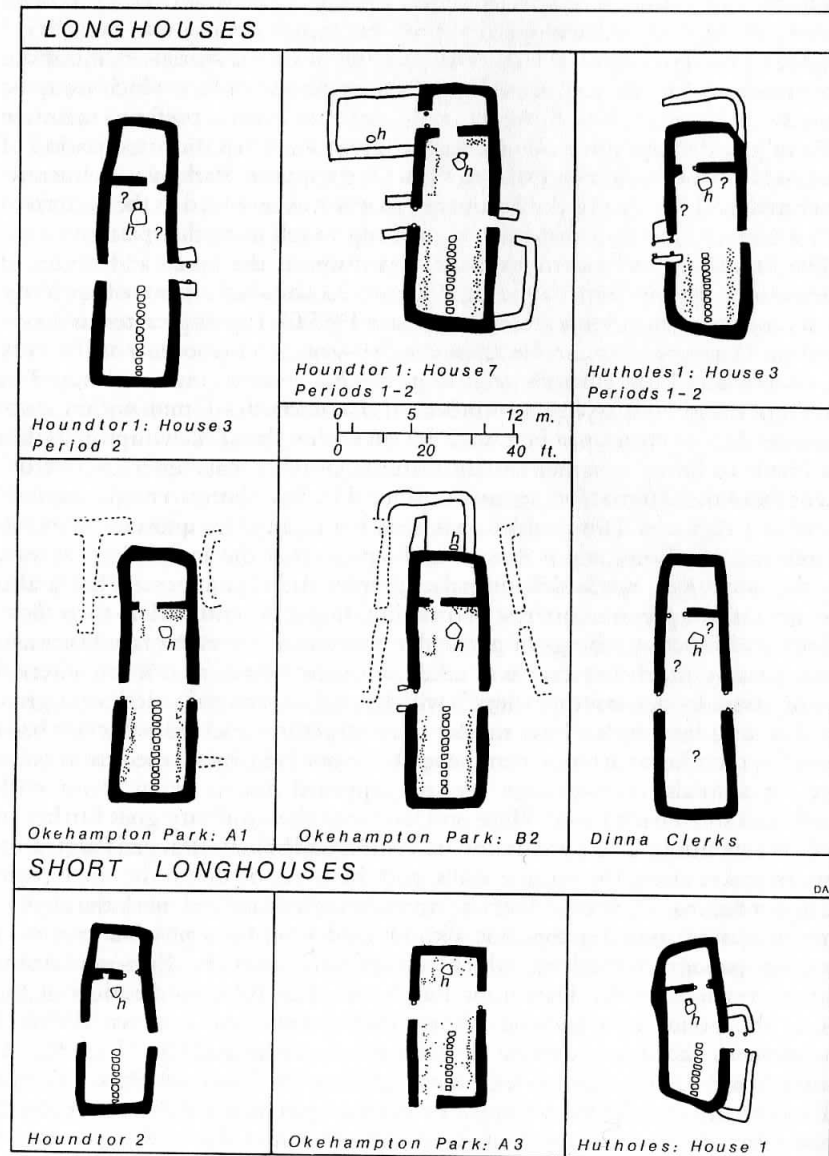


Figure 2.1 13th-century longhouses on Dartmoor, Devon.

In the main domestic areas, upslope from the doors, there appears to be a traditional arrangement: a hearth set flat on the floor two thirds of the way to the back wall, which is pierced eccentrically by an entrance to another room. The hearth, sometimes with an attached cooking pit, lies to one side of this inner door, always opposite the longer stretch of the back wall. Also, the hearth lies on the side away from the enhanced outer door, so that anyone coming in and turning at right angles into the room would walk in a straight line to the door of the inner room, passing between the hearth and an arrangement of stakeholes enclosing a rectangular space. Another group of stakeholes fills in the space behind the hearth against the back wall. The reconstruction of a functional meaning for these stakeholes is difficult, but we can say that they are permanent furnishings, probably wattled. In the Okehampton Park excavation report it was suggested that the rectangular arrangement along the outer wall was best seen as a bed, a bench, or both. The entrance to the inner room often has evidence of door fittings, but the space beyond is usually featureless.

There is a primary point to be made here: the repetition is detailed and precise. At Okehampton Park further emphasis is given to this statement by two aspects of the excavated farm's dynamic. First, the stone-built longhouse A1 was preceded by a timber building, repeated so precisely by its successor that its postholes lay directly below the stonewalls and this included the back-wall of the upper room and its door. Indeed the stone walls were in part built down into the empty sockets of some of the postholes, suggesting immediate replacement. Second, B2 was an almost exact copy of A1, apart from the laying-out of a network of drains below the building, a functional adjustment probably based on hillslope drainage problems experienced in A1, but one which would have been invisible to the daily life of the house. All of this seems to suggest that the internal arrangements of these longhouses were carefully constructed to be familiar, not just to the constant inhabitants of the house but also to anybody working and living in that region, environment, and class, whether kin, neighbours, or visitors from beyond the community, over many hundreds of square kilometres. In other words, there existed a mental template of the habitual space espoused by an extensive group. Its form can be represented in plan by Figure 2.2, but it must be remembered that it had also three-dimensional reality (more difficult to reconstruct), functional purpose, and symbolic meaning, all of which might shift through time, whether through the *longue durée* of the settlement, the *dasein* of the life and seasonal cycles, or the *durée* of the daily repetitions of activity. So, as with Peig Sayers, the space before the hearth differed between the day when the chores of cooking, preparing food, and making baskets were being done and the night, when:

the stage was set for the *seanchaí* [story-telling]. The evening meal was over, the day's work done, the family rosary finished. On the hearth glowed a small peat-fire and on the side wall an oil-lamp gave a dim light. Peig dominated the scene, seated on a low chair right in front of



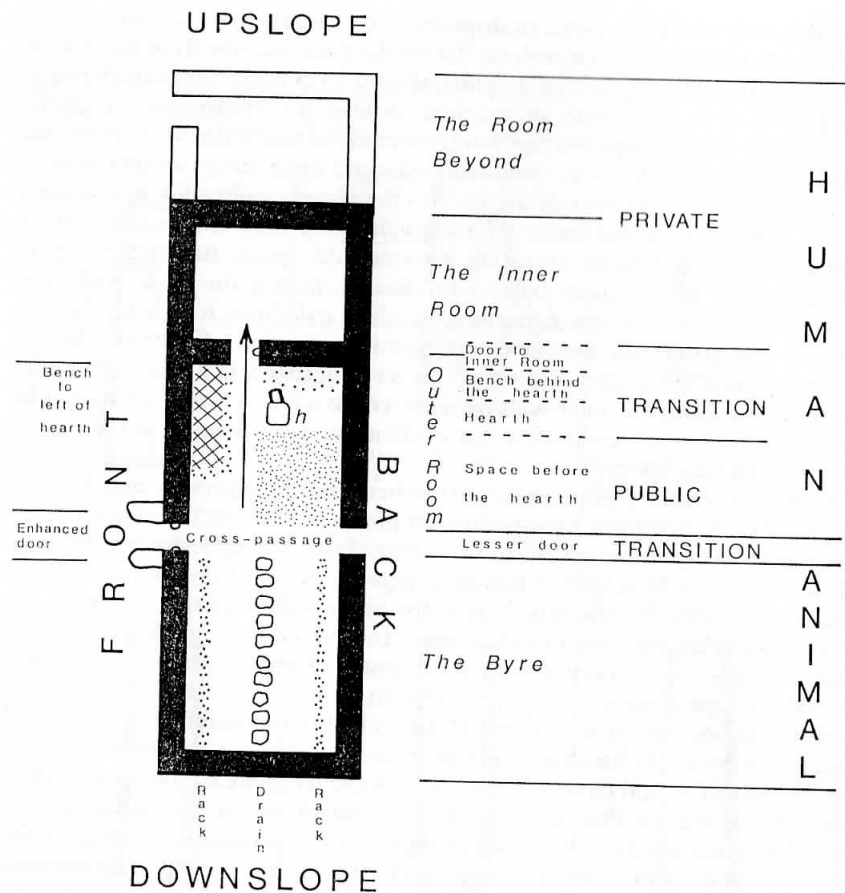


Figure 2.2 Conceptual structure of the Dartmoor longhouse.

the fire (this was most unusual in the locality; *bean a' tí*, the woman of the house, usually seated herself at the side) and smoking her pipe. Michéal her brother-in-law sat with his vamps [stockinged feet] to the fire at one side of her and Mike her son at the other. When the visitors arrived the chairs were moved back and the circle increased. News was swopped, and the news often gave the lead for the night's subject, death, fairies, weather, crops. (Sayers 1962, pp. xii–xiii)

If the space before the hearth is in this way public, an area into which the neighbour and visitor may intrude with scant but due ceremony, then the places round the hearth were for the household and the room beyond was a private space, perhaps specifically for the house wife and her man, the primary providers. Here, there is no sign of permanent furnishing, a place away from

prying eyes where group conventions needed no immutable physical expression. In this way we are, from the archaeological evidence, generating a feel for the rhythm of the house. From upslope to downslope, under the backbone ridge, there is in order: private (the inner room), the transition from private to public (the door in the back wall) and the places behind and around the hearth), public (the space before the hearth), the transition from human to animal (the cross-passage) and the transition from the outside to the inside (the opposed doors), and finally the animal (the byre).

As in many discussions of social discourse, we are finding expression through opposition: upper/lower, private/public, human/animal, inside/outside. Can we extend the argument, however, to reconstruct the wider mechanisms of social existence?

In another cultural region of Britain Johnson has examined the spatial organization of surviving medieval buildings, originally used by people of more elevated status and economic condition. His contention is that before the late 15th and 16th centuries there was a general pattern of such housing: a central hall open to the roof, with a parlour at one end and the cross-passage at the other with the service rooms (buttery, pantry and kitchen) beyond (Johnson 1986, p. 149). There was significance to this linear and repeated arrangement:

The end nearest the parlour, designated the 'upper' end, was that occupied by the head of the household, and in larger, supra-vernacular or 'polite' houses, was often physically elevated above the rest of the hall. (p. 151)

The parlour represents the private space of the head of the household, immediate kin, and privileged guests, the hall the more public space, and below this is the area of the servants. Substituting animals for servants, this is the same linear ordering as at Okehampton Park. The interiors of English medieval houses are, then, repeated and familiar spatial maps of late feudal social relations, with emphasis on the core family but with material differences from rank to rank and from region to region. In the Dartmoor longhouses a set of relations are expressed between the head of the household – usually male, as the documents tell us – the children, and the beasts. One must imagine from this point that the seating of people within this structured space at 'formal' occasions, such as the *seanchaí*, would replicate and reconstitute this pattern: the head of the household by the hearth with his (or, rarely, as with Peig Sayers, her) back to the parlour or inner-room door, exploiting the relationship between 'back space' and 'front space', public and private (Giddens 1984). For those entering the house at such formal times, particularly at the daily periods of social contact, most notably meals and the evening entertainment and rest, as well as at other special moments of the longer cycles, such as feast days and wakes, the movement is towards the hearth from the physically lower cross-passage, from the end associated with the beasts, from the darkness towards the light, and from the cold to the heat.

We can isolate, therefore, other conceptual oppositions which can be

broadly compared with those described and analysed by ethnographers, whether in western Ireland or elsewhere. Yates (1988), for example, in analysing the internal organization of Saami tents, isolates similar oppositions and from them demonstrates amply the way in which the attribution of meaning to domestic space can privilege certain persons within social discourse. Although, however, there are general similarities, we should not, as Bourdieu emphasizes, expect them to be specifically the same. Both the forms and the materials of such conceptual structures will be culturally specific. In this instance they are specific to the upland regional culture of southwestern England and generated from the material conditions of relatively low-order peasants.

We are, therefore, formulating through the archaeological text a view of how domestic activities would be carried out within symbolically ordered space and how they would be immediately qualified within the conceptual scheme. Simply by inhabiting and being brought up within this domestic space, people would come to internalize the values of their own peasant society within the fabric of a more extensive social organization. These values would come to constitute the unquestioned and usually unspoken way of things, as the space of the house framed the day-to-day discourse of the people living in it, locating any utterance or action in the context of a world-view, giving weight to the pronouncements and presence of particular individuals while at the same time undermining the position of others.

It would be wrong, however, to see the interior dispositions of the house as just the static backdrop to the enactments of domestic human relations. Changes, variations in the physical arrangements, may be, for example, actively involved in the subversion or the strengthening of specific social order. At Okehampton Park subversion is better discussed in the next section on the farmyard space, but we can ask why at Dinna Clerks (Fig. 2.1), for example, the main longhouse, normal at the 'human' end, has no provision for byring the cattle. Since in all other respects the farm complex is like its neighbours, and thus economically dependent on cattle and pasture, it must have been a matter of choice to depart from the usual arrangements here and effectively extend the domestic space at the expense of the animals. This extension may have included such things as storage provision, but in terms of familiarity and traditional behaviour it steps out of line. Here daily living would have been done differently, albeit within the same general frame of reference – opposed doors, hearth position, back-room and building type and proportions. The motives for this change are unknowable from the archaeological text and we can only speculate that they might include attempts to increase status, or mobilize a larger family, or even be simply bloody-minded for some undiagnosed psychological reason. For whatever motives, however, we can say that one individual or family has chosen to subvert the traditional pattern and order of things.

It is possible, however, at Okehampton Park to talk of strengthening the order in two specific instances. First, the A complex of buildings has two dwellings: a conventional longhouse, A1, and a 'short' longhouse, A3. At

Houndtor 2 and Hutholes (Fig. 2.1) dwellings of similar length are in fact scaled-down versions of the major longhouses, but at Okehampton Park there is no inner room and only an abbreviated area in front of the hearth. The inclusion of A3 within the A complex suggests that the family unit had been extended, but clearly this had been on condition that there was only one arrangement for one head of household in the buildings, thus avoiding any challenge to his or her authority. This is in spite of the fact that the provision for almost equal numbers of cattle in the byre of A3, matched by a third pen for sheep in the farmyard, must have meant the addition of another economic unit. Transformations in the mode of production, therefore, did not take primacy over the physical arrangements of social authority.

In the second instance we must turn our attention to the longhouse B2. Here another room with its own small hearth had been added at the upper end of the building. It had no direct access into the main longhouse area and instead its occupant(s) had to pass down a narrow space between buildings to gain entry by the enhanced doorway. Here is dependence, therefore, but for individuals who, although closely related to the household, may otherwise be a threat to the authority figure(s) of the primary producers in the main building. This may have been an unmarried sibling of the household's head, but was much more likely his or her aged and retired parents, once in authority and thus needing to be carefully, but caringly, distanced from the heart(h) of the decision making. A similar arrangement can be seen at Hutholes house 3, but the addition at right angles to Houndtor 1, house 7, must be an extension of the private domestic space of the head of household: another form of strengthening on the stem of the traditional order.

### Interpreting the farmyard

The excavation report for Okehampton Park reached the conclusion that the final form of the total farmyard shown in Figure 2.3 was the result of growth through the 13th century. The complex began with the timber building below A1 with some inconclusive evidence for lesser wooden structures near it. The next stage saw the replacement of this with the stone longhouse and the two ancillary buildings A4 and A2, with the subsequent insertion of the short longhouse A3. Complex B was then laid out, perhaps at a slightly later stage than A, although there is no clear separation in the dating evidence to demonstrate this. Indeed, it could be said that such an explanation was influenced by general documentary models of population and settlement growth to the extent that it seemed the most reasonable and acceptable explanation in the context of the historical agenda. It is possible in terms of the archaeological evidence as such for the two stone complexes to have been created at much the same time. Such a possibility in the archaeological text needs to be explored, since it might sustain a different view of the community's meaning.

We shall return to this in a moment, but we first need to examine the

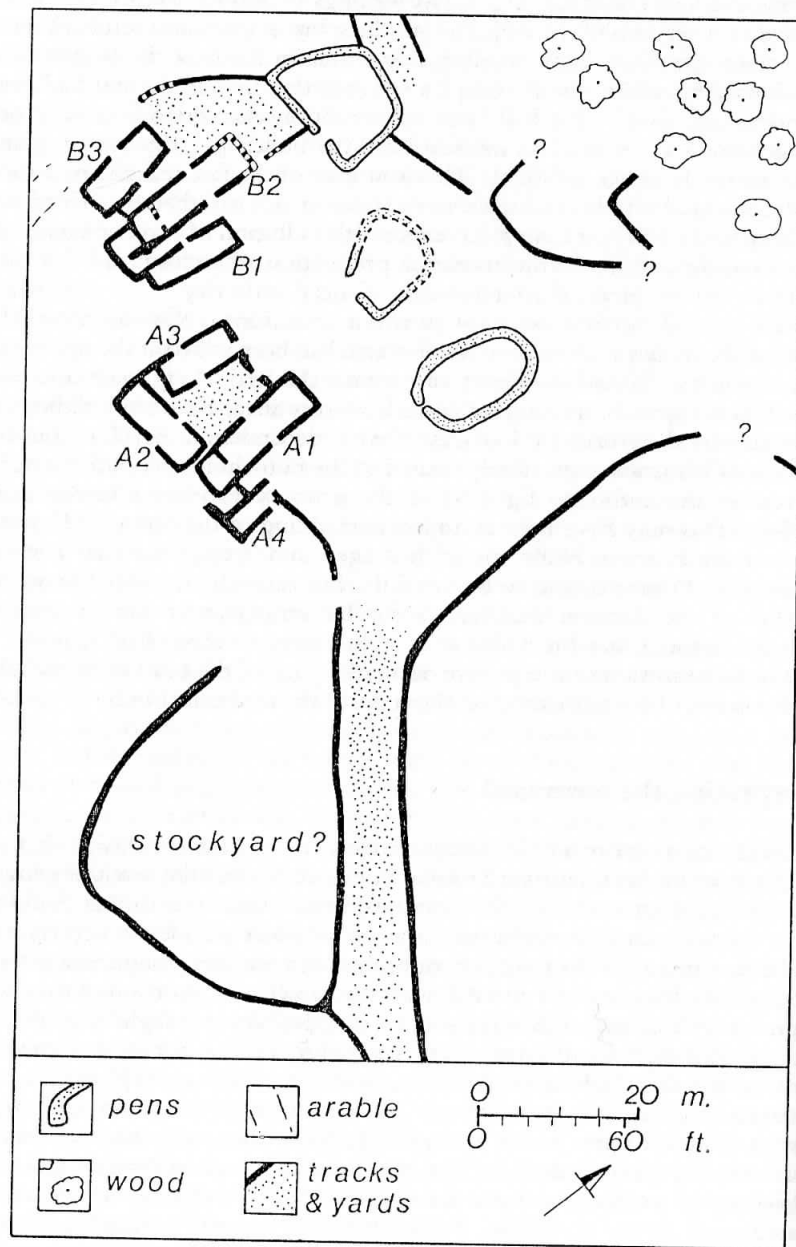


Figure 2.3 The Dartmoor farmyard: Okhampton Park 59.

structure of the space we have called for convenience the 'farmyard', recognizing that this term is only a metaphor borrowed from modern usage and that we should be careful not to transmit uncritically the underlying assumptions within it into the past. In particular, we should not assume that we are necessarily dealing here with a unitary and private space. Despite well-preserved earthworks, there was no evidence that the farmyard was ever completely enclosed, particularly on the north side, although here destruction by 18th-century boundaries may have masked the full extent of the medieval enclosure. Nevertheless, the most surprising gap, and one confirmed by excavation, was between the two building complexes – surprising, because this gave the most direct access on to the arable fields, where stock, controllable in a modern farmyard, would have been least welcome. This does suggest that animals were maintained within a different relationship. The farmyard, therefore, is somewhat open and large, on what otherwise would seem to be good, potentially productive, arable ground. It is approached by at least two enclosed tracks: one in the northeast corner, running down the slope towards the river, and the other at the southwest corner, coming off the hill and linked, as we shall see, into the network of tracks which provides the grid for the community's layout. The north-south axes of this grid provide access on to the high moorland pasture and the excavation of the southwestern track close to the farmyard revealed that it was very carefully constructed, with rammed gravel surfaces and flanking drainage ditches – clearly a major item in the community's equipment.

Internally within this relatively open, large space, perhaps the most striking observation is one to which we have alluded already: there are, in the final arrangement, two tightly knit complexes of buildings but what appear to be three economic units. The clearest indication of the latter is the three pens in the farmyard with entrances wide enough only for sheep. These match the three longhouses in a way that can be demonstrated elsewhere in these moorland communities (Austin 1985) so that each unit had relatively equal provision for cattle (in the byres) and sheep (in the pens). By contrast the ancillary buildings and small enclosed yards were tightly nested with the longhouses in the two complexes which matched the two blocks of arable ground to which they were attached (see Fig. 2.4 and p. 65). The space of the farmyard, therefore, emblemizes a fundamental dichotomy in the practice of 13th-century agriculture between pastoral and arable which will be explored as we widen our perspective on the peasant living.

Before this, however, the text needs closer scrutiny. Each complex has a small enclosed yard into which the longhouses have direct access by way of the door opposite the enhanced one: this suggests that if the enhanced door is at the 'front', or public, approach to the house, then the back door gives restricted and private access to the enclosed yard. One major ancillary, perhaps storage, building in each complex (A2 and B3) also has direct access to the yard together with an exit out into the field areas. Of added interest now is the fact that the small attached room at the upper end of longhouse B2 does not



have a door to this yard, and nor indeed does B1, which has a hearth but little other evidence of habitation.

In sum, therefore, the single location of the farmyard contains two tightly knit complexes based on identical conceptual frameworks but also with three economic pastoral units. The inhabitants of this 'place' must, in other words, have operated on a daily basis within at least three interlocked patterns of discourse and of economic and social behaviour. To unlock the meaning of this we must first ask in what sense the farmyard is a single place. The buildings are clustered together and separated from other such clusters by several hundred metres of arable field, the roadways direct outsiders towards the farmyard, there is no physical division between the two complexes, and both have buildings which give access out on to the same piece of land. All this gives shared identity and lends weight to the feeling that we are dealing with one cooperative group, probably of kin. If this is the case, we must also acknowledge that the spaces of the farmyard include much that is common to the group and open to visitors and stock coming and going along the network of tracks among the Okehampton Park farms and beyond into the lowland to the north. There is, however, a problem in the interpretation: if one group or kin, why two heads? If this can be explained by the expansion and splitting of the group, the exact replication of the conceptual framework of A by B must have been a challenge to, a subversion of, the social authority of the primary household. But we must also explain how the arable lands came to be divided into two when, as we shall see, the total space of the community was so tightly structured and apportioned. The strong suggestion is that while we are dealing with one kin, at the time when the arable subdivision was established, this kin had two households in equal authority but prepared to cooperate and share one habitation. Okehampton Park, therefore, is not a clear example of population expansion except inasmuch as the addition of the short longhouse and its unit of production increased the pastoral output while still being bonded into the same arable and household grouping. So much for the demographic explanation driven by economic history!

### Interpreting the land

In many ways the most difficult task in considering the land is to escape from the deeply rooted idea that it has been exploited and shaped by human hand to satisfy the primary need for food. This may be no surprise since remains of past exploitation, such as field systems, tend to dominate the attention of archaeology when looking at the patterns in the humanized landscape. It is easy, therefore, to slip into a way of thinking which locates the material remains in the explanations of economic and agrarian history. Thus for the medieval archaeologist the physical organization of fields and the ridging of arable lands are directly interpreted as the selions, furlongs, and fields referred to in the contemporary charters and rentals. As such they are taken to be clear confirmation of, for example, the feudal mode of production, with its patterns

of dependence, value, price, and transmission. Such a procedure often ignores, even falsifies, the vast amount of detail in the physical evidence which has to be read for its own sake and for what it has to tell us. Such was the procedure at least partly adopted in the first discussion of the Okehampton Park data. Instead, the purpose of the next two maps (Figs 2.4 & 5) is to extend our view of the reality which constituted the peasant farmers' negotiation with living, in particular into that nearby part of their world demanding so much repetition of activity through the turns of the year.

The first point to be made is that the individual farmyard clusters are scattered throughout blocks of enclosed and ridged land, demarcated by tracks, which form a rectilinear grid along the hillside (Fig. 2.5). To the south lies the higher land of Dartmoor, without visible traces of medieval fields, and to the north the steep slope down to the river, with its boggy, wet terrain. The western end of the field earthworks was destroyed by quarrying before they could be examined by archaeologists, but probably, as at the eastern end, they simply stopped, indicating a compact and discrete block of arable occupied by farm complexes. The farms were dispersed at relatively equal intervals throughout this area except at the eastern end where a small cluster of three building groups (Fig. 2.5: 113, 114 & 115) existed as a small hamlet without detectable access to arable ground of its own. Otherwise it is quite clear that each farm existed within its own piece of bounded land. These boundaries have been expressed in Figure 2.5, but the force of these can be detected only in Figure 2.4, where a relevant part of the detailed field evidence is recorded. This shows the two blocks of land associated with farm complex 59, as well as, to the immediate south, the parcel with 56, and parts of 55, 112 and 116, for which there is no surviving building group. Comparison quickly reveals that although there are broad similarities between the blocks, each has been subjected to subtly different treatments. Farm 55, for example, consisted of two equal blocks of narrow and low-ridged arable ground with no signs of internal subdivision, whereas farm 116 was partly broken down into strips and partly left in larger tracts of ridging. Throughout the enclosed area such distinctions can be made and it is clear that each individual farm household was able to make its own decisions about land use within its own arable ground. Nevertheless, this was structured within certain traditional constraints, the most notable of which was ridging. Where the ridging runs down the slope from north to south, it is possible to sustain a technological explanation that it was essential for drainage on this wet land, but the argument fails when the ridging runs along the contour and actually impedes water run-off. Similarly, it is impossible to sustain the institutional argument that it was done to provide selions or property strips as in classic open fields, nor was it done to facilitate the organization of rotation. Ridging was simply 'how it was done' within the social templates available to these farmers whose forbears must ultimately have come from lowland communities producing the ridged strip in open fields. Thus there is in the archaeology of this community a clear tension or opposition between individual initiative and traditional (or communal) behaviour. This tension extends and complicates

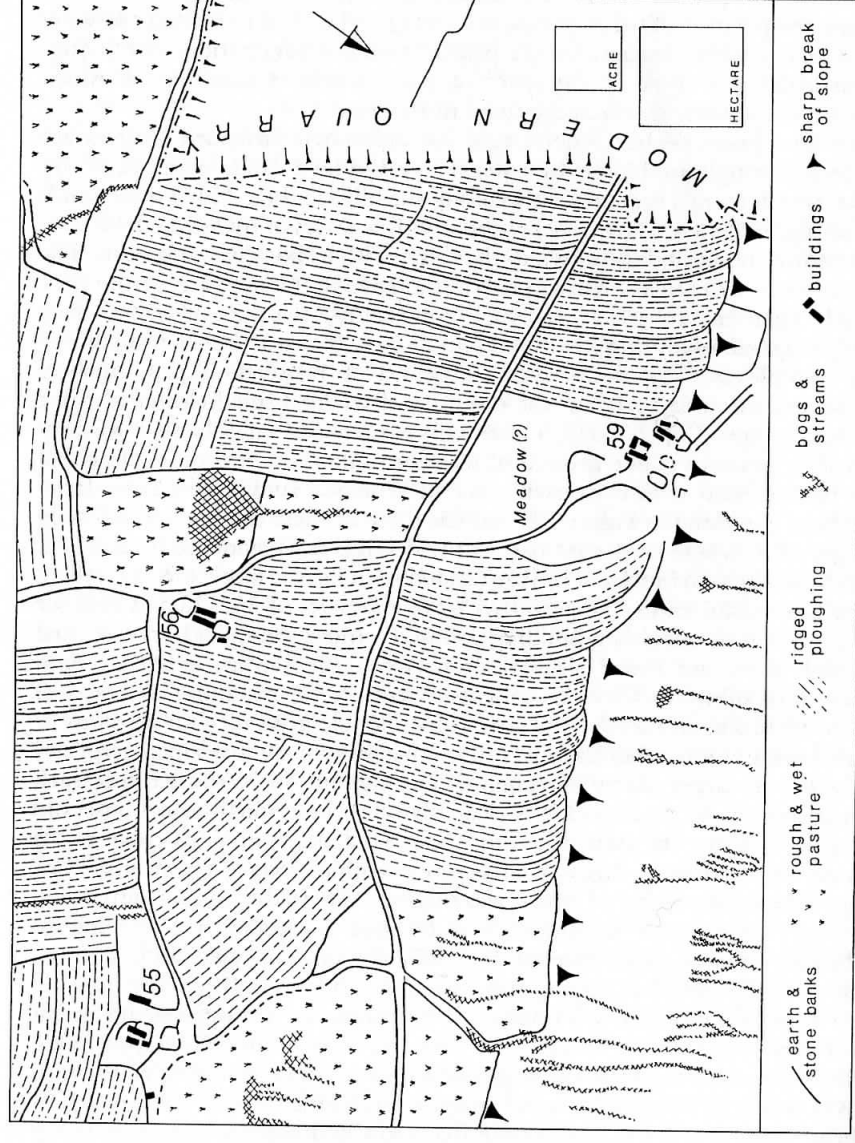


Figure 2.4 The arable lands.

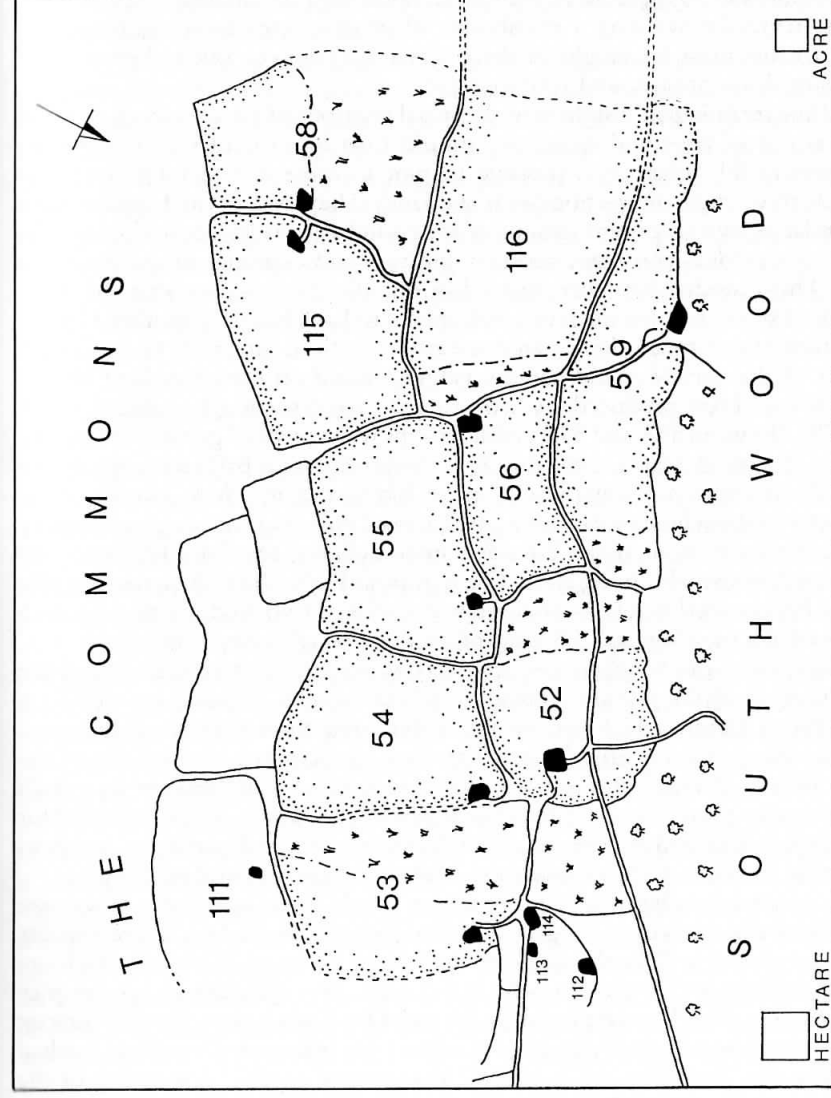


Figure 2.5 The arable land and its neighbourhood.

the separation, already encountered in the farmyard of 59, between the arable production maintained by stabilized and unified households and the pastoral production more open to forces of fragmentation. Overall, then, this neighbourhood, sharing common attitudes to the ordering of its demarcated space, could shift and adjust from household to household the material expression of its strategies for winning a livelihood. What motivated these nonfunctional adjustments must be sought in the negotiation between one neighbour and another about prestige and relative power.

While retaining an insight into the social relations of those sharing a similar experience of time and space, we should turn in particular to the peasant farmers of 59, where it is possible to plot in some considerable detail the structure of their interaction with the land. They had created within their boundaries two consistent groups of long subdivisions by constructing balks filled with stone won from constant and repeated clearance of the ploughed soil. These subdivisions were curved in one direction as they met the sharp break of slope towards the river, and appear to have been accumulated by the addition of one to another in an eastwards direction. Internally they retained traces of the very low and narrow ridging found on the other land blocks, which had been produced by iron-tipped wooden ploughs (Austin 1978, p. 238). Between 59A and 59B arable groups was a piece of ground divided by the track from the farm to the moor; without ridging or balks this appeared to have been improved as pasture or, more likely, hay meadow. Finally, at the east end of the whole block was a small area of unimproved rough and boggy land. This was in total the bounded space defining the daily labour of the peasant farmers who lived at 59, Okehampton Park: about 30 acres of arable probably cropped in seven- or eight-year cycles of two-fold rotation, about 6 acres of hay meadow and 3.5 acres of enclosed rough pasture and bog.

How, then, can we evaluate the effects of inhabiting these spaces upon the constitution of the peasant consciousness? Essentially, we need to consider a number of factors which govern the spatial orchestration of social discourse within the defined frame. First, what were the habitual movements of the population? Which segments of the community were present in which locations for particular exchanges? In other words, what was the potential for copresence afforded by regular events? Finally, how did particular locations function to frame and facilitate particular verbal and gestural exchanges?

In medieval archaeology, probably as much as in prehistory, these are questions which involve a degree of speculation. None the less, it is reasonable to assert that it will be the rhythms and cycles of seasonal labour which are fundamental to the way in which virtually any agricultural community structures its life. A certain regime is imposed by nature, yet what is of interest is how (among a multiplicity of possibilities) it is interpreted by the individual community. Bourdieu (1977, p. 134) gives a very graphic description of the way in which the cycles of labour time, production time, and slack time implicit in Kabyle agriculture are incorporated into the ritual and mythic structures of the culture through a complex series of homologues, converting the year into a series of transitions between wet and dry, fertile and barren.

Clearly, this is an example of the way in which the routine movements and actions of the subject come to structure their consciousness. Equally, we can argue that if we wish to understand the process of social reproduction within rural medieval Devon, we could do worse than begin with some consideration of the routine movements of, and the spaces habitually accessed by, the various elements of the population.

Before, however, we can discuss the routine actions of the peasants of farm complex 59, we must as medieval archaeologists recognize and evaluate certain other spaces, wider landscapes, the knowledge of which is derived not from physical markers of land but from documentary indicators of action and limit. This is a more problematical space, partly because the archaeologists are here raiding the primary data of the documentary historian, but more because it was not physically bounded and was consequently both more volatile through time and more difficult to reconstruct. Nevertheless, the peasant family moved through these landscapes, which both informed social action and reproduced the peasant society.

### Interpreting the landscape

There is a tendency among landscape archaeologists to believe that they can reconstruct the physical landscape as it was at particular times as if it were one absolute object. Yet the process of reconstruction is from a variety of different kinds of evidence, including archaeology, cartography, and written documents, each needing critical understanding. Instead, we tend to assume that since they are referring to the same piece of landscape, they are all valid evidence towards reconstruction. Yet we fail to recognize that each form of evidence is the product of contemporary social manipulation and represents a particular subjective and subtly different view of what was once a reality. We are guilty of gullibility if we believe that reality is recoverable. There are, therefore, major problems when we try to use landscapes as a guide to the societies which created them. Not only do we involve our own subjective judgement of what remains to us today, but we also catch up the perspectives of medieval lawyers and administrators, whose interest in any piece of ground is limited, biased, and even fraudulent: they may never even have seen the village or field whose revenues or disputed ownership they were recording. By and large, they were interested only in the fiscal achievements of their class and we should not expect to derive any clear understanding from them of the bulk of the medieval rural landscape, which was created by millions of daily decisions by those who lived in 59, Okehampton Park. The producers of documents were, as we shall see, involved in the landscape, but only through the processes of social reproduction and negotiation, such as their demands for rent or labour and the resistance or evasion this induced.

When, therefore, we are talking of the societies which operated in these landscapes, we must be clear what perspective we are endeavouring to reconstruct. Explicitly in this chapter we have been looking from the bottom



up, and outwards from the hearth. Thus in Figures 2.4 and 2.5 we recorded the landscapes of daily labour and neighbourhood, which would have been beyond the interest or understanding of the Earl of Devon or his officials when in residence at the foot of the hill, a fact made patently clear when in 1296 he decided he wanted a deer park on the slopes above his castle. Only two documents survive which can in any way be specifically related to this area: one, the most informative, was about switching certain rights of pannage (woodland pig grazing) from this area to another; and the other was about a land exchange to enable the creation of a deer leap. In other words, both documents had only one objective – the furtherance of the lord's attitude to the landscape occupied by the inhabitants of the Okehampton Park farms.'

Here we come to Figure 2.6 and the paradox referred to much earlier. To complete our discussion of our peasants' time and space we must take notice of their horizons and their engagement with other social groups and classes. Here as archaeologists we can go further than the prehistorian, but only if we use documents. At this stage in our discussion, it is time to call on the documents to meet our own needs within the terms of the archaeological agenda. For this reason, therefore, we must be rigorous in our understanding of the documents, so that we may be sure we are still representing a view of the peasant's social relations.

So, with reference to Figure 2.6, we can move outwards from the physically bounded agricultural lands, looking first southwards, up to the high grounds of Dartmoor. The field archaeology tells us we have moved beyond the areas of arable cultivation and the palynology tells us that this was, as it had been from the Bronze Age, open moorland of peatbogs, tough grasses, and patches of hardy shrubs and trees. For the peasants this was perhaps their most important area, since its rough but extensive pasturage sustained their herds and flocks for all but the winter months. It was here also that their face-to-face encounters became both less physically constrained and more complex. Beyond the bounds of their arable space, beyond what documents for similar communities elsewhere on the moor edge called 'the corn-ditches', began communal space, 'the commons of Dartmoor', where the opportunity for decision within the individual household decreased in the face of the need to negotiate directly with others about such things as animal management and rights of access. For this there were also traditional rules and templates of behaviour, legitimated through repeated actions, but the landscape bears little humanized signification of it, at least any that we can detect as archaeologists. Yet this must not be taken to suggest that the landscape on the high hill was bereft of social meaning or structure, or was not capable of being negotiated among the various groups sharing their presence there.

The most accessible example of this from the documents is the 'Forest of Dartmoor'. Existing from at least the later 11th century, its boundaries with the commons are known in detail only from the 16th century. Although we cannot be certain that each part was exactly the same in the 13th century, we can be sure from contemporary legal documents that the boundary did exist at that time and was based on the same principles of demarcation. These were

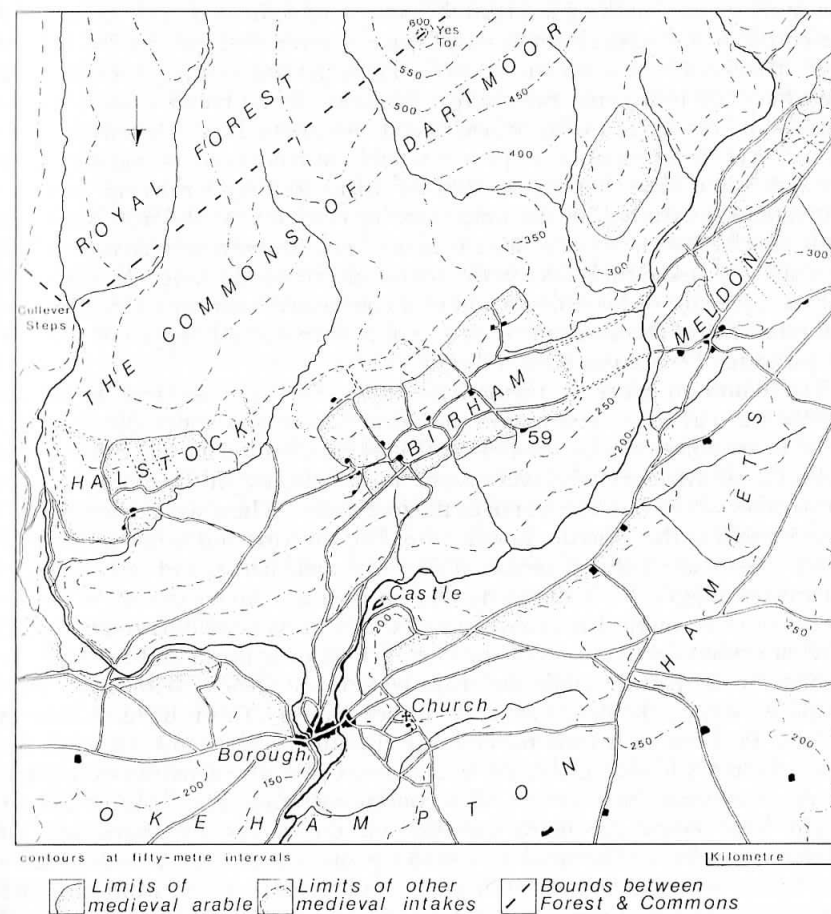


Figure 2.6 The peasant landscape.

sight lines between prominent parts of the landscape, as, for example, on Figure 2.6 between a ford on the East Okement river and the highest place on the moor, Yes Tor. As far as the peasants with their beasts were concerned, the forest represented little interference with their daily activities or their livelihood as pastoralists, since they and their beasts could move across the invisible boundary, but this was a line beyond which their status, their legal rights, and, therefore, their feelings about, and their responses to, their world changed. Forest law was different from the common law of England and if any of its codes were broken, the routeways of justice were altered to those of the king's forest court, more summary and often more brutal. The formal limitations were ostensibly about beasts of the chase and their management for the purposes of the royal hunt, but for the common person the hidden agenda

was more sinister, nothing less than the erosion of rights to justice and all they preserved, including the right to use of space (Cantor 1982, pp. 56–70). On the open stretches of the inner moor, any solitary peasant looking after his flock must have felt more vulnerable when the king's forest reeves came over the horizon, if only for fear of an arbitrary and unwitnessed act of summary 'state justice'. Yet the negotiation of power would not have been all one way. Our peasants must have hunted as part of their strategy of living and the excavations uncovered, in the inner yard of complex A, the iron head of a spear useful for such activity. We can never know the extent, if any, to which they actually risked their lives in the act of subverting the king's local power, but the existence of his officials and of a conceptual boundary hidden in the natural shapes of the landscape must presuppose that it did happen, if only for the pleasure of tweaking the royal nose.

The common pastures themselves, however, were an area in which copresence was more continuous and negotiation was more direct. They could be used not only by the peasants in Okehampton Park and others, as at Halstock and Meldon, who were adjacent, but also by all the other farms in the parishes whose boundaries ran to the forest edge. These were extensive and were known as the Venville parishes, holding this title and right time out of mind. If they are truly on medieval sites – as their names and early modern documents suggest – all the farms shown on the map to the north of the Okement river, on the better lowlands of the culm measure limestones, would have, at certain agreed times of the year, driven their flocks and herds to the high moor for pasture while the crops were on the fields. With these herds would have gone the herdsman and shepherds drawn from the local families and due to spend their time moving through the pastures and resting in the rough shelters still identifiable by field archaeology. The activities of herding would have generated contact of a continuing kind. The seasonal droves would have taken the herds up through the tracks and farmyards of Okehampton Park. The need to round up and separate strays would have been cooperative and, in cases of dispute, would have involved arbitration and power broking well away from the formal seats of justice in the manor court and town. It is likely that these and other negotiations were conducted in specific places. There are none known in this part of the moor, but Grimspound on the western moor, a late-Bronze-Age enclosure, was almost certainly one.

If we turn away now from the moor to the slopes and valley to the north, the conduct of living brought other contacts and other social structures. On the slopes down the river, before the creation of the park, were open woodland and wet boggy ground, accessible to the citizens of Okehampton for pannage and the collection of underwood. The documents do not say whether these rights were also available to the peasants up the hill, but we must assume that whether they were or not, the roofing laths and stakes for the internal fittings of 59 came from this source since no other nearer source would have been available. The arrangements for the exercise of such rights would have brought them into contact with the townspeople of Okehampton,

as would trade and attendance at the church, set in its ancient location on the hill to the west of the town. Excavations show that at least some of their production was converted to the purchase of surprisingly large quantities of mass-produced pottery, marketed, we must assume, through the middlemen in Okehampton, from whom the castle also bought its ceramics, made in the same kilns.

With the castle we arrive at the final major element in this picture of the peasant network of discourse. But before we consider their relationship with their lord, let us understand what these peasants were achieving in their landscape, in accord with what mental maps of behaviour. They lived in households framed by traditional arrangements of space. The kin hierarchies existed, but were subject to processes of confirmation and challenge. The routines of daily work were constant: in the arable fields, where the labour was back-breaking, repetitive, and narrowly confined, but where there was scope for individualistic decisions by the households; and out on the pastures, where the spaces were wider and less bounded, but where status shifted with movement and where cooperation and negotiation with neighbours were perpetual necessities. Trade and the church brought the further compulsions of harder work to make more for those objects which raised status and for those obligations which raised hopes for the afterlife. In these circumstances each person and each family could adjust the conditions of their lives as they worked through the long days and grew old.

Change, then, was a constant social occurrence and each peasant, within a traditional framework, had power of agency to affect the pace and quality of change. But was there change which lay beyond that power of agency? Here, for the peasants of Okehampton Park, the relationship with their lord becomes critical, or rather our view of it does. The archaeology is unequivocal: for all the microrhythms of existence some event or chain of events occurs, transcending them all and altering completely and irreversibly the location of the peasant *habitus*; quite simply, the farms are abandoned, together with the fields around them. Let us accept, although it is not beyond question, that the lord's decision to create a park is the immediate cause. This decision is in itself a result of changes in the seigneurial view of the meaning of the material world. The possession of a deer park next to a principal residence was, by the end of the 13th century, an important symbol of power and place for discourse – the medieval equivalent of the golf course. The earls of Devon were at this time reasserting that power by converting new wealth into material expressions of their resurgent authority. The improvements, amounting to the rebuilding of the castle (Higham 1977, Higham *et al.* 1982) as well as the creation of the extensive and highly visible park next to one of the primary routeways into the southwest, were not so much a statement as a shout. With this kind of explanation, it would be possible for us to represent the peasants as class victims of feudal structures of power: a dozen or more households turned out to create a playground for the aristocracy. The truth is that we cannot assert this from the archaeology, nor, indeed, from the documents. We have no idea where these peasants went, nor under what

terms. This is true of most desertion in medieval Europe. What we can be sure of is that these people were locked not into a simple pyramid of feudal relations in which there was no dialogue between one group and another, but into a complex network of discourse which gave access to processes of negotiation over considerable areas. It would have been entirely possible for these farmers to have been offered alternative but similar places to live and work either by their lord or by their neighbours or relations. Since they belonged to a regional peasant culture, familiar and constituted in similar terms, as we have seen, the act of moving may not have been as traumatic as we might like to think, and indeed may have given opportunity to some for material improvement, even though for others the consequences may have been disastrous. This is all speculation, but makes the point that in concentrating solely on places and things rather than on their social meaning we are apt to overemphasize such events as settlement desertion and misinterpret their significance as being the results of overwhelming forces of history beyond the power of peasant, or even lord, to mediate. Quite simply, this is not what the archaeology is really telling us when we get down to the job of reading it for what it is.

### A place of presence

Throughout this study we have endeavoured to reconstruct the *habitus* of a certain, closely defined group of peasants and it is now time to offer a summary of the space and action which constitute it. This is because the *habitus* contains and indicates the minds of the individual subjects history seeks to animate: it structures, and is structured by, each subject's knowledge and experience. As Barrett points out:

Social reproduction involves not only the reproduction of things and people, but also the reproduction of the subject's knowledge by which people acted upon things and acted in relation to other people. (1989, p. 307)

Many of the relationships within any society are made possible by the differentials of knowledge and experience which exist between subjects. The reproduction of such knowledge may depend upon the spatial domains to which they have access. In outlining the details of the movements and actions involved in the seasonal cycle of agricultural production, one is not merely providing time and motion study of material product yielded for calories of effort expended; instead, one is investigating the structuring of spatial domains of social knowledge. By considering the temporally ordered movements of people through particular spaces (at particular times of year; at particular times of day), we are better able to interpret both how copresence would be orchestrated by those spaces and how spaces and objects would have been 'read' and interpreted.

What, then, was the range of opportunity for social interaction? The house was essentially private but shared in a carefully structured way among the immediate kin. Inside it, contact within this group was constant although segregated by 'reserved' spaces and specific times. The privacy was conditional, however, on individual status and on obligation to visitors, both wider kin and neighbours, who were always expected and welcomed in the traditional familiarity of the house. Evenings and mornings, with meals and intensive exchange, differed from daytime, with its labour in the fields, journeys to market and church, and trips to the high moors with the stock. The experience of the day would tend, within a restricted landscape, to disperse the individuals, and that experience would differ through the passage of the farming year. For each individual, contact and copresence would alter and shift. Ploughing, for example, was clearly a group farm-yard activity and harvest probably involved some degree of neighbourhood cooperation, but hoeing and weeding the long narrow ridges would have been a household routine. Stock movements were less constrained by kin group or even household action, as we have seen, but when they happened the network of communication was much wider. Venville rights brought pastoralists in from lowland farms, 10–20 kilometres away, as well as immediate neighbours. On the high moors and the commons, contact during the day for the men who were shepherds and herdsmen would usually have been fitful, but at times of drift (taking stock to and from the pastures) or shearing there would be assemblies of people with widely varying lives and experiences.

Such assemblies would be repeated on a larger scale in market and church, where the wider family including women and children would have access to a broader band of discourse. Here also, and in the manor court and out in the forest, was the context of confrontation and negotiation with representatives of other classes with their other attitudes to the same space.

In all, therefore, certain repeated patterns of work and living were engrained in the house, the yard, the arable land, and along the roads to familiar and neighbouring places. Their familiarity was enshrined in their traditional repetitions. But there were cross-rhythms, dialectics generating both change and stability in the structure of household relations. There were different experiences for young and old, men and women, but there were also tensions, such as those between the binding, closed, requirements of arable production and the more open life of the pastures. It was easier to generate, as Okehampton 59 shows, new sources, and social units, of production within the pastoral dimension than the arable. This must have stimulated feelings of independence frustrated by repeated acts of dependence such as ploughing or harvesting which tugged at families within the generations.

Our intention has been principally to indicate potential. In concentrating finally on place and presence, we have focused on people, their actions, and their thoughts. We have also worked 'from the bottom up', on the basis of an archaeologically defined agenda.



## Conclusion

In this chapter we have been at pains to insist that a more productive medieval archaeology can arise only from a critical evaluation of the relationship between archaeology and history. The boundaries which exist between these two disciplines, and others like geography, sociology, and anthropology, are essentially arbitrary, depending upon a series of historical accidents which led to a certain division of academic labour on the basis of subject matter (Foucault 1972). Archaeology has thus defined itself in relation to its material, and from this has grown the set of methods and procedures deemed appropriate to its recovery and interpretation.

However, none of the present academic disciplines existed prior to the 18th century. Rather than transcendental, ahistoric entities, they are material structures which have developed out of practice taking place in the real world. It follows that medieval archaeology is what we make it to be through our endeavours. This is particularly so at a time when contradictory tendencies can be identified within academia: individual practitioners and research projects stress interdisciplinary effort more and more, yet the institutional structure tends towards retrenchment and the policing of disciplinary borders.

In these circumstances, the burden of proof unfortunately falls on the medieval archaeologist to convince his or her historical colleagues of the utility of studying the material record. We have suggested that this can best be done by adopting a specifically archaeological agenda, rather than submitting oneself to the dictates of 'historical' research objectives. We further suggest that such an agenda has become a possibility as a consequence of recent developments in archaeological theory which place the material evidence on an equal footing with the written word. The development of separate 'archaeological' and 'historical' approaches to the same period of history clearly raises certain ontological problems. At what point (if at all) do these two articulate? One answer might be that both approaches investigate aspects of a greater, and still only partly revealed, reality: obviously, even the combination of historical and archaeological investigations cannot give total and immediate access to any set of past events. So, while a 'total history', incorporating these sources and others, is a theoretical possibility, the practical potential of such a *metahistory* is open to debate.

The integration of 'documentary history' and 'archaeological history' is, however, not the immediate concern here. All that we hope to have demonstrated in this chapter is that far more can be done with the archaeological evidence, and that this can provide an account which stands alongside the documentary one as a valid means of gaining understanding of the lives of past generations.

However, as we start to contemplate interactions at this kind of level, the inferences being made are more and more divorced from the primary artefactual evidence. Of necessity, the bounds of these spheres of activity and discourse are defined more on the basis of written evidence. However, what is important to note is that this represents the extension of an analysis which

works 'from the bottom up', so that while it eventually comes to make use of documentary evidence, it does so on the basis of an archaeologically defined agenda.

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### 3 Medieval archaeology and the tyranny of the historical record

TIMOTHY C. CHAMPION

#### The concept of Europe

Contrary to what we are usually taught in elementary geography lessons at school, Europe is not a continent – at least, not in any objective sense. If a continent is defined as a landmass separate from other such masses and entirely surrounded by water, then we may distinguish America, Australia, and a third unit made up of Europe, Asia, and Africa. (The regular exclusion of Greenland from all considerations of continental status clearly has more to do with its conventionally perceived position as peripheral and unimportant than with geography, since it is actually larger than Australia.) If the definition is relaxed to stipulate that the land should be 'mostly' separate from others and 'almost' rather than 'entirely' surrounded by water, then America can be regarded as two continents, north and south being joined only by the Panama isthmus, and Africa may be distinguished from Europe and Asia, by virtue of the narrow land bridge at Suez. Europe, however, cannot be isolated in this way, since it is joined to Asia by the broad expanses of Russia and the Ukraine, which even at their narrowest points, between the Black Sea and the White Sea, stretch northwards for 2000 kilometres. Europe is in fact part of the Eurasian landmass – a small part of it and a blocked westward extension, at that. It has no obvious physiographical or environmental boundary with Asia, and the conventional invocation of the comparatively insignificant range of the Urals has no real geographical basis (Jordan 1973, pp. 1–6).

Europe is therefore a culturally constituted entity, not a geographically given one. The cultural perception of Europe as different from other areas, and frequently as superior to them, has interacted with geographical perceptions of the land, the rivers, and the sea to produce a vision of Europe as a distinct unit. This vision is one of considerable antiquity and has been modified through the ages as geographical knowledge has increased and as political structures and ideological values have changed; it has also existed alongside other perceptions of the world, without their incompatibilities ever being fully resolved (Hay 1968).

In the ancient world Europe was regarded as physically distinct from the two continents of Asia and Africa, being largely separated from them by water. The Mediterranean was the boundary between Europe and Africa; the Red Sea or the Nile that between Africa and Asia; and Europe and Asia were divided either by the River Don or by the narrows of the Caucasus between

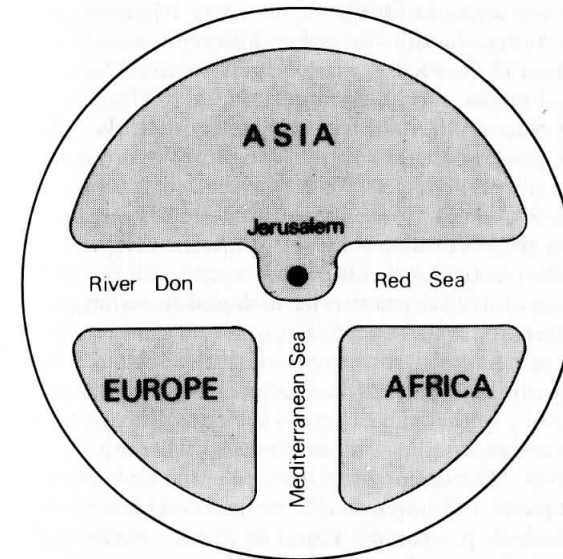
the Black Sea and the Caspian, which was often thought to flow into the northern ocean. But Europe was culturally distinct, with a superiority sometimes attributed to a more favourable climate. For the classical Greeks, Asiatic came to mean despotic, luxurious, and overweening. This polarity between Europe and Asia was undoubtedly fostered by the political opposition of Greece and Persia, but it was not necessarily the most powerful schema for categorizing the world. For both the Greeks and the Romans, the Mediterranean Sea was less of a boundary than a means of communication at the heart of their world; around the sea stretched the civilized peoples, while beyond them in all directions were the barbarians.

After the collapse of the Roman Empire and the fragmentation of political power, the prevailing perception of the world centred on the notion of Christendom, for it was Christianity that provided the unifying ideology and the institutions for transmitting it in the early medieval world. Christianity only slowly came to embrace the whole of Europe, but conversely, it extended far beyond Europe's shores to Asia and north Africa, where early churches flourished. A perception of the world focused on the political and religious organization of Christianity did not fit very harmoniously with geographical ideas of the continents, and the notion of Europe was little evoked. Where maps were produced, geographical knowledge was subordinated to ideological conceptions of the world, as in the often diagrammatic and minimally realistic representations of the so-called T-O maps (e.g. Fig. 3.1).

In the later Middle Ages the notion of Christendom declined in the face of the expansion of Islam and the demise of the eastern churches, as well as the emergence of new forms of secular political and economic power eclipsing the authority of the church within Europe. In its place more attention was given to Europe, especially since European enterprise was intensifying its penetration of other continents and the contrast between Europe on the one hand and Asia, Africa, and ultimately America on the other became more clearly recognized. New styles of map were introduced as cartography came to serve the purposes of travel, not the church; the picture they presented was no longer one of a Christian world with Jerusalem at its centre but a world steadily being subordinated to the political and economic power of Europe.

Our modern perception of Europe as a continent and as a distinctive cultural area dates, then, from the late Middle Ages and had crystallized by the 16th century. It is no coincidence that this conceptual reordering of the world should have occurred at the same time as the development of modern economic structures of European dominance, or that the world should be conventionally visualized as two hemispheres centred on the Greenwich meridian or represented in two dimensions with Europe at its centre.

This culturally constructed vision of Europe is now well established in Western thought, but it is not totally exclusive. Part of the success of Braudel's brilliant study of the Mediterranean in the time of Philip II (1972) is to be found in its rejection of the normal framework of Europe and its adoption of a geographical scope reminiscent of the old classical idea of a civilized world



**Figure 3.1** Schematic representation of a medieval T-O map of the world, showing how geographical knowledge has been modified by ideological perceptions, placing Jerusalem at the centre of Christendom, and by symbolic interpretations of the earth (Terra) within the circle of the world (Orbis).

arranged around the rim of a central sea. Such alternative views are, however, far from common.

### The boundaries of Europe

The modern conceptual vision of Europe is, moreover, not by any means unambiguous and without its problems. One of these concerns the extent of Europe and where to draw its boundaries (e.g. Jordan 1973, pp. 6–15). The creation of a concept of Europe has been helped by the fact that there are some reasonably well defined geographical limits, but they are not so firm as to provide an unequivocal determination of Europe's limits. On the north the Arctic Sea and on the west the Atlantic Ocean are clear boundaries, with the inclusion of the offshore islands such as Britain, Ireland, and Iceland. To the south the Mediterranean Sea and the Black Sea also seem to offer a firm limit, but one that is much more ambiguous. Some of the islands, such as Corsica, Sardinia, or Crete, may appear clearly part of Europe, but others, such as Malta or Cyprus, occupy a more ambivalent position; the current political division of Cyprus into Greek and Turkish zones aptly symbolizes its uncertain nature on the very boundaries of Europe (as did Crete when it was occupied by Turkey). Turkey itself blurs the boundary. Culturally, it represents many of the features directly opposed to those of Europe and by which Europe has in part defined itself. Historically, it was at one time the heart of the Christian empire and at another the centre of Europe's most strenuous enemy. Geographically, it still straddles the physical boundary of the channel between the Mediterranean and the Black Sea and retains a



foothold on the western side as Turkey in Europe. The eastern Mediterranean coast too has an ambiguous status, though for rather different reasons. The medieval presence of Christian churches has been largely eclipsed, and the crusader kingdoms entirely, but the recent immigration of predominantly European settlers has meant that modern Israel is anomalous, neither fully European nor fully Asian – geography, history, and culture in unresolved conflict.

On the eastern front, the lack of an obvious physical frontier has meant that cultural factors have played a proportionately more significant role, and the status of Russia has varied with political and cultural circumstances. For much of the Middle Ages Russia was too barbarian to be included in an image of Europe, but from the time of Peter the Great its progressive adoption of European culture allowed it to be admitted to the fold. In the 18th and 19th centuries Russia shared many of the features of European growth, not least its military and imperial expansion, so that the eastern frontier of Europe could be drawn, even if not by a very precise line, far to the east of Leningrad and Moscow, and a concept of central Europe or Mitteleuropa could be applied to the countries between Russia and the major states of the west. In the 20th century political realignments have produced a vision of Europe between the two major superpowers, the USA and the USSR, itself divided politically into East and West, and even for a time physically divided by a wall. The dramatic changes to this political structure in 1989 have in turn generated the need to redraw our conceptual map of Europe; the USSR may come to be seen as a more welcome part of Europe, and the notion of Mitteleuropa is re-emerging as the old East–West division breaks down.

### The cultural definition of Europe

Though the boundaries of Europe are ambiguous and open to constant renegotiation, they provide a spatial framework within which the concept of Europe can be defined on the basis of its cultural values. To some extent Europe's definition is constituted in opposition to those areas seen as non-Europe, which have predominantly been Asia and more recently Africa; these continents, making up the 'other', have frequently been presented as undifferentiated and unchanging, in contrast to the rich variety and historical development that characterizes Europe, and their perceived nature is important for emphasizing what is thought to be the essence of Europe.

Just as there is no objective geographical basis for the spatial extent of Europe, so there is no firm basis for its cultural definition. Europe is not united by a common language, not even a common family of languages. Many Indo-European languages are spoken outside Europe, and Europe also contains some languages from other families, such as Basque, Hungarian, and Finnish, without their speakers being thought necessarily less European. Other cultural values, such as art, music, literature, and architecture, may also be important, but they are neither universal within Europe nor exclusive to it.

Similarly, economic and social features, such as wealth, education, demographic structure, and industrial and urban development, play an ambiguous part in the concept of Europe. Jordan (1973, pp. 8–12) has even spoken of degrees of European-ness. It is hardly surprising that he finds some of the major Western states, such as France, Germany, and the UK, to be the most European, while Greece and Cyprus are the least, and even some non-European states, such as Turkey, Algeria, and Tunisia, share a few of the so-called European characteristics.

One dominant theme in Europe's definition of itself is its emphasis on the historical development of social, political, and cultural values, and their propagation throughout the world. Such a concept not only stresses the uniqueness of Europe and places a highly privileged status on the values it produced but also serves to draw other parts of the world into the concept, either by comparison, in which they are projected as inferior, or as the inheritors of European benefits.

The following extract neatly summarizes many of the features of this cultural definition of European uniqueness. It is taken from a newspaper interview with Margaret Thatcher (1989), in which she was asked a question about the future advantages of British membership of the European Community, but chose to answer it in terms of the European past.

Mrs Thatcher: . . . half our history, rather more, has been bound up with Europe. For example, our legal system came from Roman Law, the second Roman Empire, the Justinian Empire. Europe at one stage was virtually coterminous with Christendom and so many of the values we espouse to human rights [*sic*] come either from Ancient Greece or from the values of Judaism and Christendom, because those are the religions that in fact make the individual precious in his own right, entitled to dignity, liberty and choice.

So these came very much from Europe. Most of the art which we venerate and the music, European, and when I say European I do not confine it to the Community, of course not, it goes much wider than that. As I said in Bruges, Warsaw was a European capital, Prague was a European capital, Budapest a European capital, music, the art and the science.

Now all these things are essentially European and so many of them, which we call civilised values, the human rights, the rule of law, the freedom, the choice, the sound administration for which Britain is famous, not many people have such a marvellous Civil Service as we do. We took these values all over the world.

Now in China, for example, they had many scientific discoveries but they did not turn them to the advantage of the people. The Arabs were marvellous, and of course the buildings fantastic. But we had all of this in Europe and when you think of all these values Europe has given to the world, how can one be other than pro-European? But of course Europe was never united, and in that book, *The rise and fall of the great powers* by

[Paul] Kennedy, you know what he says? That one of the reasons why all this spirit of enterprise, of liberty and choice developed in Europe and why those who did not get liberty in one country – like the Huguenots – moved around to another country, was because we were not a total unity. China was. India was under the Moguls. The Ottoman Empire, they were large and rigid. So things bubbled up in one place if they were not bubbling up in another and people could move around.

So I would say that the Europe we want is much more in keeping with the Europe that gave the civilised values to the world and why I am passionate, as De Gaulle was, and it is a *Europe de patries*, freely co-operating.

This answer presents certain problems, not least over the interpretation of 'we' and 'our' (it is not clear, for instance, whether it is being claimed that the English or the European legal system is derived from Roman Law, though both suggestions are doubtful), but on the whole it is highly illuminating and makes clear many points about the content, power, and flexibility of the vision of Europe.

First, the emphasis on the cultural but more especially the social, political, and humanitarian values attributed to Europe. Second, the historic role of Europe as heir to a variety of past traditions, especially classical and Judaeo-Christian, and as transmitter of those traditions, duly preserved and enhanced, to the rest of the world. Third, the simple and damning characterization of other cultures, such as China, India, or the Ottoman Empire. Fourth, the capacity of this vision to be manipulated to suit contemporary political debate; the play made of liberty and choice, the emphasis on sound administration and the lack of political unification and centralization, all echo themes of political concern in late 1989, particularly about the future role of Britain in the European Community.

Finally, we may also note another feature of the flexibility of this concept of Europe: the claims made for Europe's unique values and for its role in transmitting them can also be cited in respect of individual states within Europe. Britain, for example, can be presented as the true guardian of European values, as here by Mrs Thatcher, in direct competition with other versions of Europe urged by other European states; or alternatively, an individual state can simply use the same rhetoric to justify expansion outside Europe, as all European imperial states did in Africa. The statue of the ancient British queen Boudicca erected in London next to the Houses of Parliament in 1902, at the height of British imperial power, has the following words from Cowper's poem 'Boadicea' inscribed on its pedestal:

Regions Caesar never knew  
Thy posterity shall sway,  
Where his eagles never flew  
None invincible as they;  
Empire is bestowed on us,  
Shame and ruin wait for you.

Thus is Britain proclaimed to be not only the true heir of Roman power and civilization, but also a juster and more humane conqueror.

Horne (1984) has demonstrated how heavily Europe relies on its past for its ideologies of the present, and how the same themes have been reworked with endless variations in individual European nation states. Perhaps it is the flexibility of this vision of European values, combined with the rivalry generated by competing autonomous European states in a form of peer polity interaction comparable to the vision of Hellenism in classical Greece (Renfrew 1986), that has made the European myth so powerful.

### The discourse of history

As has been shown above, one key element in the concept of Europe is the role of history. This raises the important question of when and how Europe originated, but in order to appreciate the answers to such questions it is necessary to consider two features of the European historical consciousness.

First, Europe's concept of past time is linear, and that line marks out a process of social change, not an enduring pattern of stability (Levi-Strauss 1966). Ideas of evolution and of progress are deeply embedded in Western thought, and despite recurring images of lost Golden Ages or of past glories, the course of the line has generally been upward and for the better (Nisbet 1980). If change has been regarded as a regular or even inevitable part of the past, the process of change has not been seen as smooth or even. Instead, certain events or processes have been promoted as the critical turning points in European development, most particularly the emergence of the classical world, the decline of Rome, and the Reformation. That all these pivotal moments should be located in a period of less than 3000 years before the present, a small fraction of the whole history of human occupation of Europe, suggests that there is another important idea at work also.

For, second, Europe's vision of its past is focused in history, in the sense both of a recorded past and of a means of studying and preserving that past. As Goody (1986) has argued, literacy has the power to transform the ways in which societies organize themselves. To his discussion of religious, economic, bureaucratic, and legal restructuring, we could also add the possibility of transforming intellectual activity, and in particular those areas of thought concerned with the society itself and its past. This is not to suggest that literacy is itself a prerequisite for a form of historical consciousness (Layton 1989), but only that such a literary historical tradition, where it exists, can dominate other forms of knowledge of the past. European culture has become so heavily dependent on the written word that knowledge based on literary records and transmitted by literary means can serve not only as a powerful medium for presenting ideas about a society, and in particular about its past, but also as the basis for the claim of a categorical distinction between the literary and the nonliterary, between history and other sources of information about human societies, between those periods and regions perceived as historically recorded

and those perceived as not, between those societies studied through history and those excluded by virtue of space or time, because they are either outside the scope of European literary records or too early to be recorded. History, both as a period of the past and as a privileged means of studying it, thus becomes a means of reinforcing the exclusion of non-European societies and of promoting those periods and those societies deemed to be historic (Ucko 1990).

History may in fact be usefully regarded as what Foucault (1972) has called a discourse, a tradition in which representations of the past, especially textual and pictorial, create knowledge of the past and in a sense also create the reality of the past itself; history determines the scope and content of the past at least as much as the past determines history. Edward Said has analysed another such discourse, that of Orientalism, 'an enormously systematic discipline by which European culture was able to manage – and even produce – the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively during the post-Enlightenment period' (1978, p. 3), and one which was never far from the harsh reality of Western political domination and exploitation of the East.

Such discourses in Western society are closely connected with the maintenance of authority and serve as devices for the exercise of power at a variety of levels. They are also characteristically associated with institutions suitably adapted to projecting the themes of the discourse; in the case which concerns us here, the discourse of the historic past, such institutions include schools, universities, museums, and officially preserved and presented historic monuments (Shanks & Tilley 1987, pp. 61–71, 186–208, Ucko 1990). Through structures such as these, various relations of authority can be enacted: of the teacher and the professor over the pupil, of the professional over the uninitiated, of the elite over the subordinated, of Britain or of Europe over the world. Hence the cultural and political importance of the past, and the need to control and to limit the meanings that can be placed on it, in the teaching of the past in schools and universities or the presentation of the past in museums and historic sites (Stone & MacKenzie 1990, Gathercole & Lowenthal 1990). Hence also the role of history in setting the agenda for the study of the past and in promoting authority by strategies of exclusion.

### The origins of Europe

The uniqueness of Europe that has been such an essential part of its vision of itself clearly raised the question of when Europe had diverged from the rest of the world and embarked on its distinctive course. For most people the answer was to be found at the beginning of the period privileged by inclusion in the discourse of history – that is, at the emergence of the classical world. First Greece and then Rome laid the foundations for the political, intellectual, and aesthetic developments that culminated in later Europe, and valued institutions such as art and democracy, as well as technology and military organi-

zation, could be traced to those roots. As Bernal (1987) has argued, European thought since the late 18th century has systematically minimized or denied the indebtedness of Greece to Oriental civilization, and likewise played up the autonomous emergence of classical society and its values. The attempt to incorporate the Judaeo-Christian moral and religious tradition presented problems for this version of the past, since it clearly originated outside the privileged area of Europe and had an ancestry older than archaic Greece, but such problems could be eliminated by espousing the concept of Europe as the only true inheritor of these traditions and the area in which they were cultivated to their full flowering.

More recently the results of archaeological investigation have also documented the indebtedness of Europe to the Near East at even earlier periods and the chronological priority of developments such as agriculture and urbanism outside Europe. Larsen (1989) has recently explained how these archaeological facts have been accommodated to the European myth in a similar way, and has given an elegant reading of a carved panel over the door of the Oriental Institute in Chicago as a highly visible symbolic expression of this intellectual incorporation of the Orient in a subservient role into the European past. The panel shows an Egyptian passing on to a European (a white male) the benefits of literacy and civilization, and contrasts (the comparison is implicitly unfavourable) the rigid, unchanging, despotic societies of the East with those of Europe. Part of this European achievement is archaeology, which itself represents a means of exercising authority over the Orient.

One alternative to the location of the origin of Europe in Greece is that offered by Gordon Childe. He showed little interest in the archaeology of the regions outside Europe and the Near East, and one of the major themes of his writing was the uniqueness of European civilization. He sought to establish the beginnings of that uniqueness in prehistory, and in various books gave rather different accounts of how Europe had taken over and brought to fruition the innovations first developed in the Orient (MacNairn 1980, pp. 4–45). His work is shot through with metaphors of the 'spirit of progress', 'civilizing missions', the Danube, 'pulsing the life-blood of progress' through Europe, and the contrast between stagnation and degeneracy on the one hand and vigour and progress on the other (Childe 1925, pp. 137, 171, 195, 200). Wherever precisely he placed the divergence of Europe, his theme was that spelled out so clearly in the preface to his first book, *The dawn of European civilization* (1925, p. xiii): 'the foundation of European civilization as a peculiar and individual manifestation of the human spirit'.

Childe's version may have been radically different in placing the critical point at a much earlier date than others had before him, but it was still an answer to the same question of the origin of European uniqueness, and explicitly accepted the same concept of European progress. Another alternative has been offered by Renfrew, who emphasizes the autonomous development of the first European civilizations. Even this extreme attempt to dissociate Europe from eastern roots cannot, however, isolate it entirely:



This first European civilization was *very much* a European development, and *most* of its features can be traced back, not to the admittedly earlier civilizations of the Near East, but to antecedents on home ground, and to processes at work in the Aegean over the preceding thousand years. (Renfrew 1973, pp. 211–12; my emphasis)

Despite these attempts of prehistorians to assign a much earlier date to the development of European uniqueness, and their various accounts of the degree and nature of indebtedness to the Near East, the prevailing perception of European origins, as witnessed in countless books, exhibitions, and museum displays, is one that pays particular homage to the role of the classical world and the importance of the historical record which it inaugurated.

### The programme of archaeology

The perception of the uniqueness of Europe and the historical discourse of the past of which it was a central feature have in turn determined much of the programme of archaeology and much of the methodology and the style of scholarship and writing – what we may call the disciplinary culture – with which that programme has been carried out. Distinctive academic languages, institutions, and structures of thought have evolved for each of the main areas into which the European and non-European past have been divided for archaeological attention.

In the Near East, for example, Kohl (1989) has argued that Western involvement in archaeology has been largely dictated by aims set by the European agenda; those themes of relevance to the European past, such as the origins of agriculture or urbanism, have been studied, while later periods, especially Islam, have been relatively neglected.

Elsewhere, outside the Near East and Europe, in America, Africa, and Australia, archaeology has been by comparison little developed and its results have frequently been aimed at perpetuating or reinforcing the idea of European superiority. The Egyptocentric hyperdiffusionist Elliot Smith is reported to have replied, when asked what was happening outside Egypt while civilization was emerging there, 'Nothing' (Daniel & Renfrew 1989, p. 86). Although most archaeologists would not nowadays be so dogmatic, the answer 'nothing of any interest' can still be heard. Daniel himself (1975, p. 371) has suggested that it was only as a result of 'the bareness of the pre-Columbian record of archaeology', in which 'nothing happened of general interest to the student of world history', that 'American archaeologists, dismayed by their archaeological record, have sought refuge in theory and methodology'. In Africa too the archaeology of the colonial regimes systematically denied the possibility of autonomous development and attributed any evidence of artistic, technological, or social development to outsiders in order to preserve the myth of African primitiveness (Shaw 1989).

As well as determining the aims and interests of archaeology, the European

vision may also subordinate other areas by the imposition of interpretative or analytical concepts derived from European experience. Both Bender (1989) and Rowlands (1989) have recently suggested that notions of complexity and social inequality are inevitably derived from the European historical experience and therefore raise problems in their application to other societies. Crumley (1987) has also discussed the way in which considerations of complexity have been transformed into analyses of increasingly hierarchical organization to the detriment of other possible structures.

Within Europe too the discourse of the past has created a variety of academic structures, with distinctive styles and disciplinary subcultures, which have in turn re-created the past. The vision of the historic past has determined the academic separation of prehistoric from historic, and the subdivision of the historic into classical, medieval, and modern, divided by the fall of Rome and the Reformation. The concept of historicity, however, is highly variable even within Europe, and the borders of these subdivisions can be endlessly negotiated and renegotiated: Mycenaean culture, for instance, could be excluded when first discovered and rejected as too ugly to be Greek, but it now occupies an ambivalent place at the beginning of history; the Etruscans sit slightly uncomfortably on the edge of classical archaeology; the English term 'prehistory' does not mean quite the same as the French 'préhistoire', the former terminating at the Roman conquest and the latter at the end of the Bronze Age, to be followed by 'protohistoire' – in this way the final pre-Roman centuries of France are studied in a different way, in different institutions, and published in different journals. Medieval archaeology extends to include some areas of the post-Roman world, such as early Saxon England or Scandinavia for much of the 1st millennium AD, in which the historical record is minimal or nonexistent; the evidence available would align them more clearly with the later prehistoric period, but they are subsumed into medieval archaeology because of the overriding concept of a historically recorded medieval period beginning with the fall of the western Roman Empire.

The archaeology of the historically recorded periods of Europe, therefore, which developed as part of a discourse in which the uniqueness of the European historical experience and the primacy of the written word as a means for appreciating it were integral, inevitably reflects the superiority both of Europe as a cultural entity and of history as its record. Both classical and historical scholarship have been enshrined at the heart of the educational establishment in Europe, in schools and universities. The study of the classical past, emerging from the disciplines of *Philologie* and *Alturumswissenschaft*, which first flourished in early-19th-century Germany, fostered a formidable culture of detailed, even pedantic, scholarly learning which came to be regarded as the paradigm of a humanistic subject and was widely adopted in the reformed universities of Europe; it was also invested with an important social meaning as the attribute of the learned elite (Jenkyns 1980, pp. 60–67, Bernal 1987, pp. 281–300). Classical archaeology developed as an integral part of this mature academic discipline – what Renfrew (1980) has called this 'great

tradition'. It was a comparatively minor part, one which was unable to contest the dominance of the literary tradition but was closely attuned to the cultural values placed on the Greeks and Romans as the originators of the European aesthetic tradition.

History soon followed as an organized academic discipline (Levine 1986). Its growth in the 19th century owed much to the emergence of nation states, and their need to create a historic past for themselves, and to more general ideas of social progress (e.g. Burrow 1981), and was similarly characterized by the blossoming of detailed scholarship and a highly technical academic culture and language. Medieval archaeology may have emerged only quite recently as a separate academic subject with its own institutions and journals, and in reaction to the domination of medieval material studies by an excessively architectural and art-historical bent, but those are still important themes and the early interest in them was likewise related to contemporary political and social concerns. In his introductory statement outlining the reasons for the foundation of the Archaeological Institute, Albert Way (1844, p. 2), its secretary, gave a clear account of the relationship of archaeology to society:

To preserve from demolition or decay works of ancient times which still exist, is an object that should merit the attention of Government, not merely on account of their interest as specimens of art, but because respect for the great Institutions of the country, sacred and secular, and a lively interest in their maintenance, must, as it is apprehended, be increased in proportion to the advance of an intelligent appreciation of monuments, which are tangible evidences of the gradual establishment of those Institutions.

The concerns of the Institute were not exclusively medieval, though they did form a major part.

More recently medieval archaeology has embraced a wider range of concerns, but those have still been dictated by history and the programme it has set, as Austin has argued (Ch. 1, this volume). Even its geographic scope has been culturally determined: the early towns of Russia and Viking activity in the east can be included; the Islamic presence in Europe, on the other hand, can be mostly ignored, though both in the southeast and in Spain centuries of Islamic presence were an important feature of the historic past and left a legacy, among other things, in art, architecture, religion, learning, and food.

The overtly political context of medieval and later archaeology may be less marked than in the time of Way, but the broader cultural context that has determined it is still strong. The growth of postmedieval and industrial archaeologies, with an emphasis on such themes as fortification, industry, and technological progress, and little attention to the social and environmental costs of such activities, offers an uncritical, and hence implicitly supportive, treatment of European economic and political domination.

## The tyranny of the historical record

In an article dealing with the understanding of hunter-gatherer societies, the American anthropologist Martin Wobst (1978) coined the phrase 'the tyranny of the ethnographic record' to denote the constraints placed on prehistoric archaeology by the limited range of societies recorded by ethnography and the similarly limited range of interpretative possibilities open to archaeology if it allowed itself to be confined to the ideas derived from that source. We might similarly think of the tyranny of the historical record, in the sense that the programme for the archaeology of the historic period in Europe is set by history and the historic vision of the past. Not only are the materially based studies of archaeology regularly subordinated to those of the literary record but the entire conceptual framework of questions and evidence is limited by historical concerns ultimately rooted in a vision of European uniqueness and implied superiority.

The academic disciplines of classics and history have proved to be remarkably robust institutions in the European educational system and, in contrast to other fields, such as geography, sociology, anthropology, or literature, have been largely impermeable to the theoretical and methodological debates of recent years. The decline of classics, at least in Britain, has been due to wider social and educational phenomena rather than to any radical assault on the concepts or values involved. In history the growth of alternative approaches, such as oral history, black history, women's history, and history from below, has had little impact on the solidity of the disciplinary structure as a whole. Neither classical nor medieval archaeology has had much success in asserting the value of its evidence against the written word. Snodgrass (1984, 1985) has explored some of the reasons for this as well as some of the possibilities that might be opened up in the classical field; for the medieval, Rahtz (1981, 1983) and Hodges (1983) have attempted to bring some of the attitudes of New Archaeology to their field, but their statements are little more than optimistic programmes for the future.

Part of the reason for this solidity is possibly to be found in the critical role played by these disciplines in the construction of a discourse of the past, and a consequent reluctance to see them in any way threatened. It is interesting, however, to compare the development in England of the study of English literature (Doyle 1989), which was first accepted as a legitimate interest for higher education in the late 19th century as part of a widespread cultural redefinition of English national identity. Its ideological context is therefore not in doubt, but literary studies have been at the forefront of recent theoretical discussions and in this case at least ideological considerations have not prevented critique.

Part of the answer perhaps also lies in their long-lived and deeply entrenched position at the heart of education, and in their promotion of a highly technical and very detailed culture of scholarship, which has militated against wider discussions of theoretical matters or of the social context of the discipline. Austin (Ch. 1, this volume) has drawn attention to the truly

enormous quantities of data produced by some medieval excavations, especially in towns, and the danger that concern for the minutiae of this evidence and the development of expertise in the technical methods for manipulating, documenting, and publishing it, might stifle wider questions of discussion. This is in stark contrast to the position in prehistoric archaeology and also in anthropology, where the prevailing culture of interpretative discussion has meant that the primary detailed records of field expeditions are seldom published (Spencer 1989). The style of what is published in a discipline can indeed be a clear indication of the intellectual values espoused by its practitioners.

If, then, medieval archaeology is indeed to play a larger role than it has so far, how is it to break out of the shackles of the historical tradition? One solution, as Austin has argued (Ch. 1, this volume), is to contest the notion of the primacy of the written word and to assert the potential of the material record to offer insights of equal value, and of a sort not available through history. As Driscoll (1988) has urged, archaeology can provide insights into such matters as power and social organization, and the past can be interpreted as a pattern of meaningful action on the basis of both artefacts and documents. There are indeed already many examples, though significantly very few of them from archaeologists, of how the material of the historic period may be read in this way. To cite a few, we could note studies of burial (Gittings 1984), ritual (Cannadine 1983), and the iconography of power (Strong 1984).

Alternatively, it would be possible to challenge not just the primacy of documents but the whole fabric of the historical framework with its constraining concepts of Europe and of the medieval period as validly bounded fields and uniquely privileged fields of study. Medieval and postmedieval archaeology in Europe have developed within those limitations, rather than as historical archaeology (e.g. South 1977), a term that carries a much lighter load of ideological overtones. Restructuring the archaeology of the historic period in Europe as a discipline which seeks to understand the difference between Europe and other societies rather than to assume it and to ignore the non-European would create an exciting and relevant area of inquiry. The contrast between these two approaches is neatly captured in the titles of two books dealing with broadly the same theme of European expansion in the early modern world: one is by a European historian and is entitled *The triumph of the West* (Roberts 1985), the other is by an American anthropologist and is entitled *Europe and the people without history* (Wolf 1982).

There is an alternative framework for understanding European difference. It has emerged particularly from recent work among historical sociologists and historians specializing in the study of historically documented but non-European societies, such as China and Islam (e.g. Mann 1986, Hall 1985, Baechler *et al.* 1988, Crone 1989). This recognizes the uniqueness of Europe, but stresses not its preordained inevitability but the fortuitous conjunction of circumstances that permitted European growth; in Gellner's vivid metaphors (1988, p. 4), we have moved from the acorn to oak tree vision to the accidentally-open gate model. In this comparative approach to the under-

standing of premodern and precapitalist societies, there is much scope for an archaeological contribution, in such fields as technological innovation, household formation, subsistence economies, and the limitations on the exercise of power and authority. In a recent study of preindustrial societies (Crone 1989), which admittedly concentrates on the more recent past but draws heavily on China, India, and Islam as well as medieval Europe, it is striking that there is only one specifically archaeological item in a wide-ranging bibliography.

Rowlands (1984, p. 154) has claimed that a prehistoric archaeology of Europe does not exist except as a presentist projection into the past of current concerns with establishing an ideology of Europe, and Shanks & Tilley (1987, p. 22) have argued that a European history should at least be aware of its place in an established socioeconomic political structure. How much more important, therefore, is it that an archaeology of the more recent past should be critically aware of its role in contemporary ideology and prepared to challenge the meanings placed on the past. Historians have recently been urged (Cannadine 1987, Raven 1989) to look beyond their narrow professional concerns, to take note of how the meanings placed on their work are negotiated in contemporary social or political debate, and to engage in those discussions, or else see public respect and support for history wither, as it has for classics. Medieval archaeology should surely also pay good attention to that warning.

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# 4 *A comparative study of Czech and British medieval rural settlement archaeology: towards whole landscapes*

MARTIN GOJDA

## Introduction

The archaeological investigation of medieval rural settlement now involves a number of commonly agreed procedures which produce the most meaningful results and it may be useful right from the beginning to itemize them. First, there are complex interdisciplinary studies using all relevant accessible data that might reveal evidence for the creation of both the spatial arrangement and the form of human settlement. Second, there are contextual approaches, which can (a) identify general and specific trends within the processes of settlement creation, (b) reveal the linkages between the social being and the social consciousness in the structure and mechanisms of settlement systems, and (c) decode the nature of the structure itself by recording and analysing its results and products. Third, there is field strategy, which preferably combines in an interactive way both research and rescue excavations, providing a compromise between the leisurely investigation of intact ancient landscapes and the hurried work necessary to recover information in the face of irreversible change about to be caused by industrialization or agricultural development.

The development of these procedures has been greatly assisted by settlement geography and a simple classification of its main framework of research will demonstrate the close relationship between the two types of study. First there is the examination of the spatial organization or morphology of a settlement at a microstructural level – that is, the area occupied by a community and its immediate hinterland, including its field system; then analysis at a mesostructural level of a region, reconstructing a *Siedlungskammer* or other naturally bounded area, which may also be an administrative unit; and finally, the understanding of the macrostructure, by the examination of general evolutionary trends in the processes of creating larger territorial units, such as early historical states.

In all these areas of research the range of material available for the study of settlement history creates difficulties. There are at least two ways of dealing

with the problem. One is a narrow topographical or geographical approach: data is simply gathered, with a view to building territorial distributions of past settlement activity, but without analysing the processes obscured within the observable phenomena and patterns. The other is a broader approach, which can be called dialectical-historical and deals with the whole complex of surviving remains of both the social being and the social consciousness by progressively revealing their context. For the latter, it is necessary to consider not only archaeological features but also objects or material culture, which together are components not only of the same single social and economic structure but also of a once living culture. It is necessary to examine the natural environmental determinants, with their real and potential relationships to the operations of past settlement systems, as well. And finally we must understand the whole structure of settlement in terms of how it results from the dialectical conflicts between the socioeconomic and the spiritual needs of human communities.

The topographical or geographical approach is a useful starting point when investigating a region at the mesostructural level. The methodology involves a number of different stages of analysis. First, there is the usual gathering and evaluation of source material, both previously known and previously unknown, which may be relevant to the settlement history. Next, systematic field survey and site mapping, both large and small scale, are followed by analysis of specific relationships between located settlements and basic elements of the physical landscape. The final stage is to trace the chronology of settlement patterns to determine change and evolution.

This will give a general idea of the region's development before we move on to the detailed analysis. It provides an initial basis for estimating or predicting the possible relationships to be found within a settlement system, allowing choices to be made and a specific research strategy designed. An example of such a strategy might be the establishment of the relationship between potentially nodal sites and dependent communities. In addition to facilitating this process, cartographic representation of sites assists in two other ways: in the analysis of settlement trends in larger territory – for example, the changes from early to later medieval Bohemia; and in the provision of a readily accessible framework of settlement information to which it is possible to return after at least one piece of higher-level or dialectical-historical analysis has been completed. At this stage judgements can be formed about the nonconformities and inaccuracies of the whole range of data available.

The first part of settlement analysis, therefore – the geographical or topographical approach – is of a lower order and determines 'settlement pattern'. The second part is of a higher order and takes us to the 'settlement system' (Flannery 1976, 162–3).

## The study of settlement history in Czechoslovakia

Research into settlement history in Czechoslovakia has a relatively long tradition, but was undertaken mostly by historians and linguists. Only since the

1970s has this branch of research been converted into an integrated study supported by other disciplines in the humanities and natural sciences; archaeology, with its own methods of field survey and settlement excavation, plays an increasingly significant role. History, ethnography, toponymy, and architectural and art history are more important for the study of later periods; on the other hand, cooperation with the natural sciences is particularly useful in the earlier phases of medieval settlement.

In recent years, however, medieval settlement history has been increasingly regarded as part of a wider landscape history, in which landscape is seen as a product of the economic development of communities. In this, environment is a decisive factor, especially in the process of site location (Gojda 1988). A product of this thinking is the research design for the whole of Bohemia codified in the State Plan for Basic Research, which is usually compiled for a five-year period. In particular in this region there has been a progressive shift from excavation of individual sites to wider studies based on complete landscapes in the work of the Department of Medieval Archaeology at the Prague Institute of Archaeology. Smetánka and Klápště, the leading exponents of this approach, focus on the development of theory and methods which can be applied to the investigation of later medieval Bohemia (c. 12th to 14th centuries), as well as projects involving the Czech landscape which investigate the structural changes of rural settlement. For example, in the 1960s Smetánka began a series of research excavations on deserted medieval villages in Bohemia, and initiated a long-term strategy for the study of Czech medieval rural studies. Klápště, by contrast, has conducted regional analyses of medieval landscape and examined various aspects of the rural hinterland of certain Czech towns (for general surveys with bibliographies see Smetánka 1971, 1981, Klápště & Smetánka 1982, 1986). The Department of Medieval Archaeology also coordinates the activity of other individuals or institutions working on settlement history (e.g. the Museum of the Hussite Revolution in the town of Tábor).

The research objectives of the Department for Medieval Archaeology centre on several sample regions in which there is systematic surface observation of both the landscape and places threatened by industrialization or building activity. This consists of the surveying and mapping of deserted villages, architectural studies in the surviving villages, trial sampling, and excavation of selected sites. The strategy is being applied extensively in central Bohemia (the Prague rural hinterland, the Kostelec-nad-Černými lesy and the Čáslav regions), but also in other areas, such as the area around the town of Most in northern Bohemia. The investigation of medieval villages is conducted within a so-called 'mosaic strategy', based on the idea that results from a number of minor sample surveys can be used to distinguish between random and regular phenomena. Thus the investigation of the Czech medieval period has been carried out in close association with studies of landscape, economy, and spiritual life.

Recently, the methodologies of archaeological field survey have been developed considerably, concentrating in particular on the recovery of plans

for both deserted and extant villages and on the evaluation of activity areas by surface collection of artefacts and by the recording of soil and vegetation differences. These are linked to detailed surveys whose primary aim is the precise location of all man-made features within deserted villages. Such an approach is rewarding, especially when features which cannot normally be found by direct observation are identified (Smetánka & Klápště 1981). Computer graphics are now also being applied to the mapping of earthworks, buildings, and other features of deserted villages, as at Potálov in south Bohemia, where soil-colour techniques have been used to detect postholes (Krajč *et al.* 1984). One major project currently is an investigation of deserted 'Hussite' villages which formed the agricultural hinterland of the towns of Tábor and Sezimovo Ústí (e.g. Smetánka 1965, Krajč 1983).

Turning now from the later to the early Middle Ages, dating from the 6th to the 10th (or even possibly the 12th) centuries, we have what is traditionally known as the 'archaeology of the Slavs'. The primary objectives of postwar research have largely centred on the investigation of hillforts, which are important elements in medieval landscapes and one of the most visible manifestations of the process by which society progressed from the tribal to the state stage of development. Long-term projects have been carried out on the sites of Stará Kouřim (Šolle 1966), Klučov (Kudrnáč 1970), Libice (e.g. Turek 1966–8), Libušín (Váňa 1973), Levý Hradec (Borkovský 1965), Budeč (e.g. Váňa 1978, Šolle 1982), and Vyšehrad (Nechvátal 1976). Of great importance is the research at Prague castle, the seat of Czech rulers from the 9th century to the present day (e.g. Borkovský 1969, Smetánka & Frolik 1986). Overall in Bohemia, approximately 35 hillforts have been excavated more or less intensively, with the result that certain features and trends in their evolution can be classified as being typical: for example, forms of fortification and the layout of occupied areas in the interiors. Recently, however, archaeologists have questioned whether the chosen strategy, aimed at individual hillforts only, meets the needs of current research objectives. As a result more emphasis is now being given to the study of rural settlements, which were, after all, fundamental components in the economic base of early medieval society, being in direct dialectical relationship with the hillforts, which served as nodal points. Other related studies have also been conducted and attempts at reconstructing settlement geography and environments for the areas around several hillforts have been published (e.g. Kudrnáč 1961, 1962, Turek 1971), but the authors themselves have recognized that their data base was poor. We have little knowledge of village plans, since villages have not been systematically excavated and the state of their preservation is bad. This is especially true of the 'hillfort-period' villages of the 8th to 12th centuries: their locations are, in most cases, fairly well known, but little more can be said about them other than that they were dispersed round the nucleated cores of present villages, which were created in the 13th and 14th centuries during major shifts in settlement pattern. There are just two exceptions to this general lack of information: excavations at Staré Badry, a village which was settled twice, first between the 6th and 8th centuries, then



between the mid-10th and the end of the 12th centuries, when it was fortified (Justová 1981); and excavation at Jenišův Újezd, where extensive stripping of topsoil revealed settlement continuity from the 6th to the 13th centuries (Bubeník & Velímský 1986).

In summarizing the current state of research, we can say that what we know most about are the form and layout of our earliest medieval communities of the 6th and 7th centuries and of our later medieval villages of the 13th and 14th centuries. For this reason it seemed appropriate to start intensive surface survey and excavations on some of the settlements located close to selected Old-Slavic hillforts. To this end, the hillfort of Budeč and its hinterland were chosen a few years ago, but the excavations have so far progressed unsystematically, although the results of field walking have already been published (Gojda 1988).

Since the mid-1970s some regional analyses of environmentally and geographically defined areas have appeared in which the development of early medieval settlement has been studied. In comparison with the works of the 1960s – for example, in the Litoměřice region (Zápotocký 1965) and in the eastern part of central Bohemia (Kudrnáč 1963) – a different approach can be distinguished, stressing the reconstruction of the early medieval landscape, exploring particularly the topographical relationship between settlements and their basic environmental contexts. With this new approach in mind, concentrating especially on the analysis of settlement microstructure, lists of soil grades, made in the 19th century before extensive industrialization, and geobotanical maps have been widely used, although recently these sources have been subjected to adverse criticism (see e.g. Neustupný 1987, pp. 638–9). Studies of this type in the regions of Bílina (Váňa 1977), Děčín and Ústí-nad-Labem (Zápotocký 1977, 1978), and in the Ohře (Bubeník 1988) and lower Vltava valleys (Gojda 1988 & in press) can all be characterized as geographical regional analyses. The next step will be to proceed, within these regions, to detailed studies of rural settlement areas on the microstructural level.

One further point should be made in relation to the research strategies centred on early medieval hillforts: the cognate study of the relationship between high medieval castles and their economic hinterland has not yet developed in Bohemia, although several suitable sites – for example, Řebřík (Durdík 1977) are known. What archaeological research has been undertaken so far on Czech castles has concentrated on the study of architectural types and sequences, particularly in a selected part of the royal hunting forest and several sites in which excavations preceded consolidation and reconstruction (e.g. Durdík 1982). Systematic research has begun only recently on fortified manor houses and the establishments of the lesser nobility.

Historians have also studied settlement development and have directed their attention principally at regions on the periphery of the 'old settled core' of Bohemia, which was colonized for the first time in the later Middle Ages. These are marginal areas where environmental conditions are less suitable, mostly because they are uplands. In terms of chronology, these studies usually

cover the whole of the Middle Ages and all available historical sources which can help reconstruct settlement processes have been utilized. Among the most important of these are studies by Boháč (1978) in the middle Vltava valley and by Žemlička in the Zbraslav region (1974), the lower Ohře valley and the Czech Central Highlands (Žemlička 1980). General reviews of settlement history studies in Bohemia have been published (Klápště & Žemlička 1979, Klápště *et al.* 1982) and from these it is clear that, as well as archaeological evidence, source material is drawn widely from documents, art history, ethnography, church dedications, toponymy, and ecology.

Another important area of research which impinges on settlement history concerns the nature of the most fundamental aspect of the medieval economy, its agriculture. The main exponent of such an approach, Beranová (1980, 1986a), was instrumental in founding an interdisciplinary group for the study of prehistoric and Old-Slavic agriculture. It conducts long-term experiments in the cultivation and harvesting of cereals using ancient methods and replicas of original implements. Beranová has distinguished three principal stages in the development of medieval agriculture: (1) nonintensive cultivation, which was accompanied by occasional shifts of settlement (the early Slavic period, 6th and 7th centuries); (2) intensive agriculture of the long fallow type (c. 8th to 10th centuries and probably even 11th and 12th centuries); (3) intensive fallow agriculture of the three-field system (13th to 15th centuries, although this may have begun in the 11th and 12th centuries). The most important aspect of this chronology is that it denies the existence of the three-field system in the last quarter of the 1st millennium AD. It is true that by the 8th and 9th centuries the major qualitative change in settlement and agriculture, which had been started by the first Slavic groups of the 6th century, had ended. In essence, this was a changeover to a grass and arable system, based on an optimal use of long rest periods of fallow, a form of agriculture which in the context of relatively low densities of population and the availability of large deforested areas was even more profitable and less labour-intensive than the later medieval system of three-field rotation. Beranová also demonstrated that the Slavs practised plough cultivation and never used slash-and-burn agriculture, as some have previously argued.

Where such approaches, based on prehistoric settlement analysis (Neustupný 1986), have been applied to extensively excavated medieval sites (Beranová 1986b), they demonstrate an understanding of the connections which exist between economic systems and settlement distribution. To explain these complex issues it is necessary to construct models of the whole system so that study of individual communities will include consideration of all relevant factors, such as the village core, fields, meadows, pastures, and woodlands. These should, for the most part, start from field archaeological and ethnographical observations, which can then be used to test individual aspects of the settlement network within various geomorphological and climatic constraints. I consider this form of analysis one of the most important to be derived from settlement geography. For example, Peške (1987), in his study of slash-and-burn agriculture, focused on the circulation within the soil

system of essential nutrients such as nitrate, phosphate, and potassium and revealed the stability of their quantity through time; his results refuted the theory of cyclic agriculture in prehistory. Of similar significance is a study of river and stream meadows by Opravil (1983) which explained the reasons for fundamental differences in the characteristics of the early and later Middle Ages. The ultimate cause was variation in the patterns of human interference with the landscape during periods of intensive colonization through deforestation, which led to soil erosion and rises in the water table.

Another important project which set out to explain site processes is the experiment conducted at Brezno by Louny which explores the construction of early Slavic sunken-floored houses and the modes of living in the relatively small spaces of these structures (Pleinerová 1986), including the preparation of meals (Pleinerová & Neustupný 1987). Its significance lies in the attempt to find explanations for the material culture found in settlements and in placing the artefacts within the context of a working household of the early Middle Ages. More recently at Březno experiments have been extended to include the production of prehistoric and medieval types of pottery.

When we consider the present state of Czech medieval settlement history, we find that most research problems are addressed, more or less equally, by both archaeologists and historians. The need for mutual cooperation has been widely recognized, and new approaches to settlement study are frequently pursued and developed by specialists in both fields. This has led to joint publications, but so far no extensive cooperative research project has been undertaken. On the other hand, there has been successful collaboration between archaeologists and architectural historians working on medieval sacred and secular buildings.

Historians and archaeologists of the early Middle Ages have tended to focus their attention on analyses of larger regions, on the scale of hundreds of square kilometres. They use as their starting point existing and newly acquired data, especially those dealing with topography and site environment. The principal objectives are analyses of settlement distribution and of the forms of property and ownership within the society which existed towards the end of this period. Archaeologists of the later Middle Ages aim at the same kind of explanation, but by long-term strategies of data recovery, which they call the 'mosaic approach'. These begin with exhaustive surveys of the rural microstructure of a village and its adjacent areas. Only detailed knowledge of several microregions, selected with respect to variations in landscape types, makes it possible to characterize the particular features of settlement organization and to formulate rules about their historical evolution. Thus our fundamental objectives must be to proceed from the level of 'settlement pattern' to that of 'settlement system' analysis. Such a 'holistic' approach is complemented by the 'categorical' (Austin 1985a, p. 201), which attempts to study individual elements in the total process under investigation.

## Czech and British research on medieval rural settlement

In Europe British historical geography has an important position, mainly because of its development of methodology and scientific analysis but also because of its constant efforts to find new approaches and themes in the investigation of settlement. The evolution of this discipline in Britain has recently been described in outline in Czech by Baker (1987), who suggests that the process has passed through three stages: from the traditional to the modern and now to the postmodern. During the traditional stage of research, individual categories of settlement development were studied while, at the same time, regional analyses were being carried out, from the theoretical standpoints of both empiricism and pragmatism. From the mid-1960s, under the general influence of the positivism then current in geography, came modernist approaches, building closed models of spatial organization and applying exact mathematical methods. Since the end of the 1970s, postmodernism has tried to humanize the modernist approach and has drawn attention to the inadequacy of its uncritical applications of methodology. Coupled with this are attempts at complex regional studies of landscape which take a dialectical approach in looking at reciprocal action between people and the environment. The objective is the revelation and explanation of the immense variability that exists in the forms of the humanized landscape in which the specific is emphasized at the cost of the general, a relationship based on a preference for interpreting in terms of the absolute and regular operation of historical evolution. Postmodernism in historical geography criticizes the distinction between the cultural and the physical landscape and its mechanistic modes of explanation, because all landscapes should, by contrast, be seen as 'symbolic embodiments of the values of their creators, infused with cultural meaning and replete with clues to the perception, ideals and attitudes of historic individuals' (Coones 1985, p. 8).

Clearly the postmodern direction of historical geography can, to some extent, be compared with structural and symbolic archaeology (Hodder 1982), which, in contrast to structuralism as a philosophy, considers the historical context in the analysis of phenomena and the significance of the individual in relation to the culture. In general, we can see in the recent developments in British historical geography the influence of dialectical materialism – that is, interpretation in terms of the conflicts among the internal elements of the social structure which thus become the instruments of evolution. We can also trace historical materialism – that is, explanations of the development of human society as a process of transformations in nature caused by men and women, in which social practice forms the basis of their existence and which is the source of social consciousness. At the same time, however, the social consciousness is acting progressively on the social practice.

Turning to British medieval archaeology, one of the lines of postwar research (see Cherry 1986, pp. 163–5) has in general terms focused on forms of rural living, in ways which are, in many respects, close to Marxism. In this the material culture of the higher and lower social classes has been studied equally,

and the decisive role of producers in economic development has been identified. Indeed, environmental and landscape archaeology can be considered as a form of analysis which makes a practical application of historical materialism in examining the dialectical relationships between the individual, society, and context as the motive force of historical development.

One recurrent problem in British methodology is the place of medieval archaeology within medieval studies as a whole (e.g. Austin 1985b, Ch. 1, this volume, Webster 1986, p. 156, Harfield 1988). Clearly, there are conflicting opinions, which range from traditional ideas of medieval archaeology as subservient to documentary history to those which advocate approaches in field methodology and explanation related to those in prehistoric archaeology. It should be obvious, however, that archaeological data and contexts primarily need to be interpreted by archaeologists. Although at first sight this might seem to be a rejection of formal history, in practice it is recognized that the two disciplines must mutually coexist as elements of the same complex subject – the wider history of the Middle Ages – independent from each other only in their methods of analysing primary data.

There were similar discussions in the 1950s and 1960s between Czech archaeologists and historians. While affirming the basic concepts of historical materialism, many serious questions were raised, especially those concerned with methodology, such as the definition of basic categories and concepts. One serious flaw in early medieval archaeology was, for example, that only the possibility of external cultural characteristics had been examined, while fundamental issues about the internal operations of society and economy had been neglected. Criticism first came from ethnographers (e.g. Černohorský 1952) and historians (e.g. Graus 1957), who pointed to inadequate 'historical' explanations of archaeological evidence by some archaeologists, and a new critical approach was formulated for this type of historical evidence (Filip 1957). Since then, what can and what cannot be understood by means of archaeology has been agreed. As we have already discussed, the need for a mutual integration of history and archaeology has now been recognized, although this still needs to be put into practice.

Affinities in the subject matter of both Czech and British medieval archaeology can be seen best in the aims of landscape study. Scholars from both countries are aware of the dangers which come from the industrialization of the landscape and from intensive mechanized ploughing. Ideally, it is recognized, we must conduct excavations and fieldwork in locations under threat, while research investigations in other, unthreatened, areas should focus on the sampling of various environmental types. In Britain the Society for Landscape Studies attempts to develop the subject across the boundaries of traditional disciplines. The establishment of this society can be seen as the institutionalization of the present trend to abandon the vertical for the horizontal approach – that is, changing from the study of single components of the settlement process to the study of the whole system in all its complexity. Such a shift is also apparent in the creation of the Medieval Settlement Research Group, which replaced the former Medieval Village and Moated

Sites Research Groups. This trend can also be seen in the changes which have occurred in the research strategy at Wharham Percy (Austin 1985a, p. 203), and at present such goals are also being followed by the Sutton Hoo Project.

The state of landscape studies in Bohemia has recently been examined by Klápště (1985), who has pointed to the obstacles which still prevent practical projects, although methodologies have been agreed in principle. Perhaps the nearest we have to the study of landscape history is in northwest Bohemia at Most, where there is a branch office of the Prague Institute of Archaeology. Here, extensive soil stripping and destruction caused by coal mining has led to substantial research in several microregions, mostly the valleys of streams and small rivers. For example, the Lužice valley, some 30 square kilometres in extent, is now probably the most thoroughly investigated of areas between 10 and 100 square kilometres (Smrž 1987). Apart from long-term archaeological excavations, in which approximately 200 hectares have been stripped, there has been work on the reconstruction of past hydrology, geomorphology, and geobotany (Kyncl 1987, Neustupný 1987), as well as the detailed study of ecology. In the region around the town of Most special attention is being given to the changes in settlement structure during the transition from the early to the later Middle Ages, through field survey, analysis of the spatial relationships between early and later medieval villages, and the study and excavation of the rural establishments of the elite (Klápště 1986).

In the development of such projects Czech archaeology has been considerably handicapped in comparison with British archaeology. Perhaps the most important aspect of British landscape studies has been the sophistication of its aerial photography, in the quality of both its coverage and its interpretation. By contrast, in Bohemia aerial photographs have been taken only occasionally, mostly where they could be used to help in the evaluation of a few important sites, usually during excavation. For reasons beyond the control of archaeologists, this most important technique is still largely unavailable, although the first systematic air survey has recently begun in Moravia.

Despite this contrast, however, British and Czech studies of medieval rural settlement share at least one primary and major objective: understanding the transitions both from dispersed to nucleated settlement patterns and from irregular to planned occupation sites. Although in such research there is still a need for more new data, it is becoming increasingly apparent that in both Britain and Bohemia this process occurred at different times in different areas. In some of the British regions changes started as early as the 8th century, while in others they can be detected only during the course of the later Middle Ages, especially the 12th and 13th centuries. In Bohemia there is evidence that the process began only in the period of transition from the early to the later Middle Ages (c. 13th century), in close association with the introduction of a new agricultural system, the fallow rotation of three fields. The spatial organization of fields then changed, new areas were colonized, a market economy began to dominate, and towns expanded. This process of nucleation and settlement planning appears to happen intensively, and more or less evenly, throughout the whole settled territory of Bohemia, all within a very



short period, from the end of the 12th to the beginning of the 14th centuries. Yet even here, the case of the Prague hinterland cautions against overgeneralization, and perhaps suggests that the sequence of settlement organization in areas close to major urban centres was different from that in more rural districts. Here the macrostructure appears to have been created well before the later medieval changes of the 13th century (Gojda, Ch. 14, this volume) and this may well be a parallel to the situation of early nucleation in the English Midlands, where the urban networks were being created in the later Anglo-Saxon period.

There are many other points of comparison between British and Czech medieval archaeology, but this chapter is intended only to outline some of the general directions and approaches in the study of settlement development. Such comparisons, however, were one of the important fruits of the World Archaeological Congress and it is clear that medieval Europe would benefit from further systematic applications of comparative methodology in the years to come.

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# EARLY STATE AND ETHNIC FORMATIONS



## 5 *Byzantium and the Avars: the archaeology of the first 70 years of the Avar era*

ISTVAN BÓNA

### **Introduction**

Emperor Justinian I received envoys from the Avars, who had been driven from Asia into Europe at the beginning of the year 559, and concluded an alliance with them in an attempt to defeat the Bulgarian and Turkish tribes from the Black Sea area which were harassing his empire. This alliance involved the annual payment of an unspecified sum of money. Until recently the only evidence of this arrangement was the *solidus* from the reign of Justinian I found in the Avar tomb at Kunágota, although we know definitely that financial support was introduced by Justinian II at the end of 565. After they had established themselves in the Carpathian basin in 567–8, the Avars began to mount regular campaigns against the empire, and the rulers of Byzantium were able to avoid these attacks only by paying large amounts of tribute. The annual sums paid to the Avars reached 60,000 *solidi* in 573, 80,000 in 578, 100,000 in 584, 126,000 in 604, and, finally, 200,000 in 622. Then, in 626, when the Avars' attack on Constantinople failed, the payments came to an end. The several million *solidi* that had been paid out to the Avars over a period of nearly 70 years appear to have vanished without trace.

### **The Avars and the indigenous production of gold jewellery**

Between 40 and 50 Byzantine gold coins only are known to us. They come from 20 or 25 graves of Avar lords, where they were placed either as funerary offerings or as ornamental objects. What objects were found with the gold coins that subsequently made their way to museums is not known. Only one hoard of coins from the Avar empire, dated 560–630, has been discovered. This evidence suggests that a considerable portion of the gold coins from the Khagan's treasury, whether obtained as booty or as tribute, must have fallen into the hands of the ruling class or warriors. That gold was received from Byzantium is demonstrated not merely by the existence of the gold coins but also by the costumes and weapons of the first three generations of Avars settled in the Carpathian basin. During the 'Golden Age' of the Avars, virtually all free men and women would have worn ear-pendants fashioned

out of pure *solidus*-gold. The more distinguished also had gold-plated belts, swords, quivers, and daggers. For centuries historians and archaeologists believed (and some still do today) that the same ethnographic model that is applied to the Kirghiz and Kalmuck peoples, who in modern times have found themselves reduced to extreme poverty, could be applied to the Avars. According to this model the nomad is able only to keep herds, has no ambition, is incapable of progress, and is condemned to eternal poverty. Although the archaeological heritage of the Avars was identified 120 years ago, on the basis of the grave contents, which included a rich supply of gold ornaments, gold-plated weapons, and Byzantine *solidi*, the researchers of that period, with their classical approach, made little of the goldwork. It was observed that the style used was no longer 'classical', yet because of the strikingly high level of craftsmanship, it was not classified as 'barbaric'. Since the grave contents included not only the Byzantine *solidi* but also Byzantine gold objects with Greek inscriptions superimposed and other Byzantine jewellery, it was concluded that this ornamental goldwork must be the product of an already decadent classical art – that is, Byzantine art. When later, between 1880 and 1930, graves of Avar goldsmiths were discovered, containing motifs of a Byzantine type in sets of moulds, as well as Byzantine scales and sets of weights, then the following hypothesis took root once and for all: that the early objects fashioned by Avar goldsmiths were the work of provincial Byzantine craftsmen who lived in the Byzantine empire or among the Avars. Today this is still the most widely accepted view.

The real state of affairs is, however, quite different. The Avar empire, organized on lines similar to those of Central Asian and Persian models, had an abundance of Oriental craftsmen. These included metalsmiths, who produced exquisitely worked stirrups and spears, and goldsmiths, who supplied the needs of the rigidly hierarchical Avar society, not to mention the bow- and saddle-makers. It was not the goldsmiths who came from Byzantium, but the weights and scales used by certain of the goldsmiths. The goldsmiths themselves, in accordance with their highly respected rank, were buried in cemeteries such as Gátér, Fönlak, and Kunszentmárton with an Avar belt, a complete set of weapons, and sometimes even a full suit of armour and a horse of their own, as proof of the fact that they were counted among the Avar ruling class.

The goldsmiths satisfied the specific needs of the Avars in their own highly individual way. The fact that well-known Byzantine decorative objects from the Mediterranean were not popular in the Avar empire is proof of this. The sole complete set of Byzantine women's jewellery (ear-pendants and a necklace from Gács) came to the Carpathian basin only after the Avar period. Of the rare Byzantine ornaments of this period that have been found in Pannonia, 60 per cent are from Sopianae (Pécs) and Castellum (Keszthely) or their environs – that is, within the orbit of the Balkan-Byzantine or Italo-Lombardic peoples about whose settlements information is provided by contemporary Byzantine and Italian sources. Furthermore, the grave contents themselves demonstrate the alien, settled, and Christian character of these

peoples. Gold and silver ear-pendants, decorated with openwork figures of birds facing one another or with disc-shaped pendants, were found at each of five sites in the two above-mentioned areas. With three exceptions, all the examples that were discovered at three of the sites were golden basket-shaped ear-pendants of Italo-Byzantine origin.

We can count the pieces of real Byzantine jewellery of this period on the fingers of one hand: a gold bangle with a monogram from Kölked, a golden ornamental buckle with enamel inlay from the Khagan's grave in Kunábony (this last piece in a form carefully reworked by Avar goldsmiths), necklaces from Kunágota and Szegvár-Oromdülő embellished with pendant decorations, and, finally, the gold mounting of the Kunágota sword. These pieces show that the Avar goldsmiths were not interested in plates of gold decorated with moulded mythological scenes; they cut them up with no compunction and reworked the gold in order to decorate swords. It is thus clear that, apart from a few exceptional cases, they regarded Byzantine gold as no more than raw material.

### Avar jewellery types

Typical Avar gold jewellery is frequently encountered in this period. Its Avar identity is demonstrated by the fact that similar forms and motifs are found on a wide scale and with wide-ranging variations in silver, bronze, and occasionally even glass. It cannot, therefore, be mistaken for Byzantine art. Graves containing gold jewellery are to be found within the early areas of settlement; they are absent in Lower Austria and Slovakia but are found in the Woiwodina and in Transylvania.

The jewellery is most frequently of a Central Asian type, which can be traced back to the time of the Parthians. There are large, dangling earrings, decorated with round gold pendants, early examples of which, worked in gold, have been found at nearly 100 sites (Fig. 5.1). They were worn by men as well as by women. Some of them are also adorned with smooth gold balls weighing 3–4, 5–6 or 7–8 grams. Other elegant balls, richly decorated with granulations and filigree work and weighing 5–6, 8–12 and 14–15 grams, have also been found at around 16 sites so far. These last are one-off creations: each pair is the work of a different craftsman. The most representative examples of work from this period are earrings with pyramid-shaped pendants. Early variants, probably based on classical models of the Üllő-Szegvár type of east-European/Crimean/Caucasian origin, have so far been found at eight sites, weighing 3–4, 7–9 and 12–13 grams. Large, specifically Avar examples of the Inota-Szentendre type were, however, found at 18 sites, weighing 13–15, 17–18 and 24–26 grams. In almost all cases the lower end of the ear-pendant consists of a large hanging ball; inside the pyramid frame, each set has its own specific cellular decoration, sometimes inlaid with stones of overwhelming beauty, if these are still intact. Finally, heavy earrings with pyramid-shaped pendants, usually weighing 15 to 17 grams,

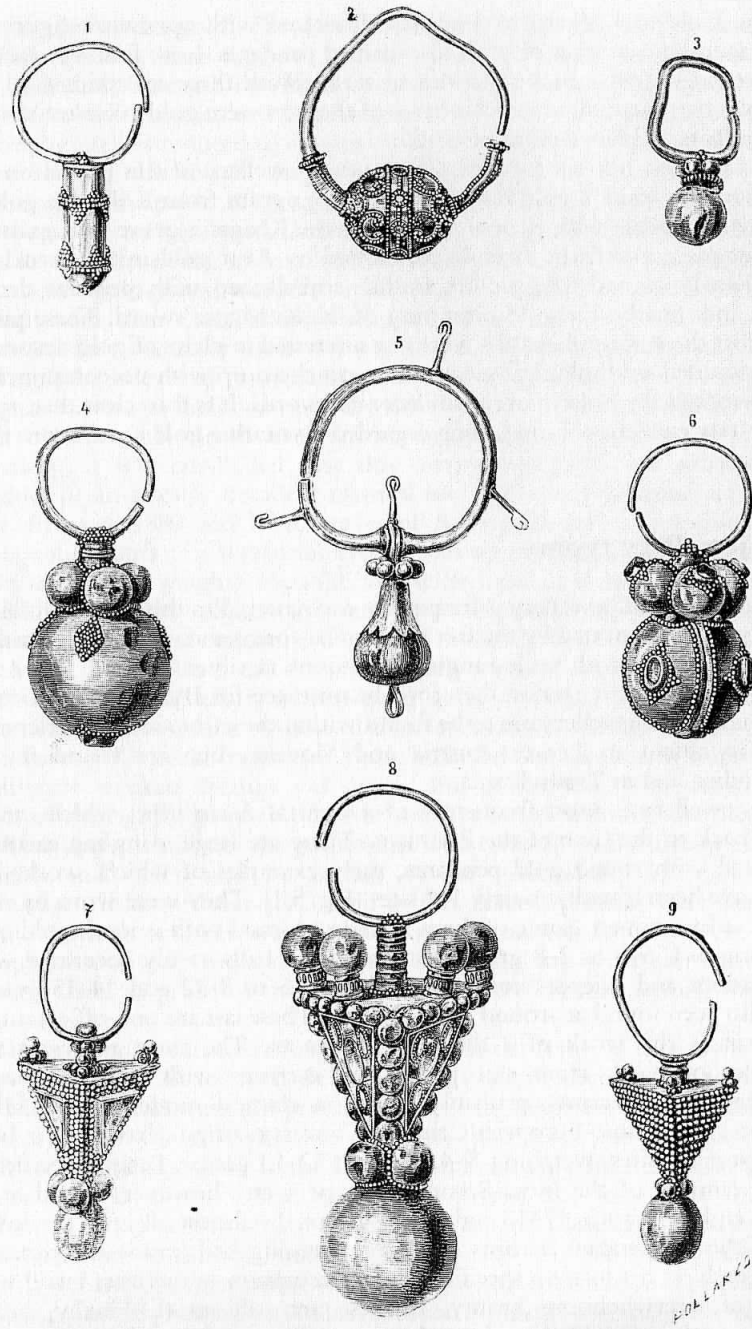


Figure 5.1 Characteristic gold Avar earrings from Hungary (after Hampel 1905).

which cannot be classified as belonging to any particular type, have been found at 12 sites.

The details with regard to weight clearly reflect the wealth of gold available to those commissioning the work, since the largest earrings with pyramid-shaped pendants are each made from 8 to 10 light *solidi* (the Byzantines actually paid their tribute in light *solidi*). Hardly a single earring from this early period has been found that is lighter than the weight of one *solidus*. Avar gold earrings – with the exception of one found in Bavaria and another in an Italian-Lombardic region – come from early areas of Avar settlement. The 'sites' mentioned by art dealers in the last century, such as Rome and Cyprus, which were cited as the basis for their 'Byzantine' origin, can today be disregarded. The few comparable examples of such earrings from southern Russia were produced at local workshops, for customers from the steppes who wore similar costumes to those of the Avars.

### Conclusion – Avar and Byzantine status

Within the distribution area of the golden earrings with ball-, pyramid-, and ball-shaped pendants, all kinds of princely burials have come to light. These contain so-called belts with false buckles in pure gold – often several pounds of worked gold; complete gold- and silver-plated ornamental swords of a Central Asian type; and gold- and silver-plated quivers and harnesses. In short, they contain all the goods that represent the Avar ruling class as being of Oriental origin. Within this area, the graves of the goldsmiths are also to be found. Of their moulds, 99 per cent were used for the production of so-called 'nomadic' harnesses, saddles, and decorations for belts, helmets, and headwear. The Byzantine motifs of plants and birds, which are found on certain belts, serve only to demonstrate that the Avars were just as incapable of escaping (or as unwilling to escape) the artistic influences of their great Mediterranean neighbour as were the Lombards from Italy during the same period. The objects which they decorated with Byzantine ornamentation were, however, accessories for specifically Oriental costumes and symbols of rank, such as the 'nomadic' belt with many additional straps, richly covered with plates of precious metal. Not even the Byzantines themselves could resist taking over and wearing these belts.

The immediate influence of Byzantium on the work of Avar goldsmiths assumed a very different form after 630. Again after 670, following a transitory upswing in the fortunes of Byzantium, it took an even less positive form. Elucidation of the details of that epoch requires, however, further research.

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## 6 Connections between Scandinavia and the East Roman Empire in the Migration period

BIRGIT ARRHENIUS

### Introduction

The rich finds of Roman *denarii* and Byzantine gold *solidi* on the Baltic Islands of Öland, Gotland, and Bornholm have aroused scholars' interest since the 19th century. Although Bolin pointed out in the 1920s that many *denarii* had probably reached Gotland before the Goths arrived in the Black Sea area (1926), *denarius* finds have mostly been interpreted as a sign of the connections between the Goths and their northern relatives. Lind (1988, p. 210), however, has recently proposed a new hypothesis suggesting that the *denarii* were paid to the peoples of the Vistula area to prevent them from joining the Goths, who were attacking Rome from the 240s onwards. Parts of these payments may have ended up in Gotland and in mainland Sweden as a result of piracy or tribal warfare. The occurrence of gold *solidi* in Scandinavia has also been given various interpretations, from payment to soldiers in the Roman army or tribute to the loot of the homecoming Heruls, as suggested by Lindqvist (1945). Recently, Hedeager (1988) has discussed the possibility that the Roman coins were used as standard currency in Scandinavia. My aim in this chapter is to examine some of the recent hypotheses put forward in connection with the discussion of the eastern connections during the Scandinavian Migration period.

### Eastern connections as opposed to connections with the late Roman Empire

As currently used, the term 'eastern' can mean connections with Germanic tribes found at this time in the east Baltic countries, Poland, Russia, Pannonia, and the Ostrogothic kingdom in Italy, as well as direct connections with the Byzantine empire. We should, however, discriminate between the inter-relations of different Germanic tribes and more direct connections with the late Roman Empire.

### Direct contacts between Scandinavia and the late Roman Empire?

There are two new works on the finds of gold *solidi* in Scandinavia: Kyhlberg (1980, revised 1986) starts from the *solidi* treasures found at Helgö, and Herschend (1980) investigates the gold finds from Öland. Both authors have convincing arguments against the view of the numismatist Joan Fagerlie (1967, pp. 83f) that the *solidi* reached Scandinavia in a continuous stream. Instead they demonstrate, using different statistical methods, that the gold *solidi* seem to have arrived on special occasions. One such occasion appears to correspond to the large payment made to the Germans in Pannonia by Leo I around 461. Kyhlberg further assumes that this payment was given to Scandinavians taking part in the Ostrogothic revolt in Pannonia.

In my opinion, it is difficult to decide from the coins alone on which side the Scandinavians fought in the wars around the Roman Empire during this period; in wartime a good soldier could always be used. However, the observation that the coins did not reach Scandinavia in a continuous stream but on special occasions supports the hypothesis that there were direct contacts with the late Roman Empire. If the coins had reached Scandinavia only through trade, one would have expected an even stream for as long as such trade continued.

Other precious and prestige items undoubtedly of Byzantine origin found in Scandinavia also seem to be an indication that there were direct contacts with the Empire in the 5th century. Later, in the 6th century, these connections turned to the Ostrogothic kingdom in Italy. This chapter concentrates on Byzantine finds in Scandinavia from the late 4th and 5th centuries other than coins. These are the items which can elucidate what kind of relations existed between the late Roman Empire and Scandinavia during this period.

### The status of the source material

One of the problems in studying connections with the Empire is the difference in archaeological source material between Byzantium and the surrounding barbaric tribes. In Byzantium Christianity became the state religion at the beginning of the 4th century. The Christian church had a strong impact on grave ritual (Brown 1987, pp. 282ff.) and funerary goods became less and less frequent. Moreover, Constantinople was continuously occupied, which led to the reuse of older material which might have become archaeological remains.

As a result, our knowledge of the material culture of the early Byzantine period is meagre. However, certain items are undoubtedly of Byzantine origin: stamped silverware, carved ivory (Lafontaine-Dosogne 1979, pp. 103ff.), and a certain type of jewellery called gold *cloisonné*, inlaid with heavy garnets (Arrhenius 1985).



**Figure 6.1** The Olbia find: necklace and ear-pendants (after Ross 1965).

This type of garnet cloisonné, which used to be thought of as the work of the Goths, is characterized by large and heavy garnets cut from templates, sometimes in a coarse stepped pattern. The garnets are inlaid in the so-called cement technique: at the bottom of the cells is a heavy layer of cement consisting of true gypsum; garnets are fastened on top by turning over the walls of the cloisonné cells. My reason for attributing this kind of cloisonné work to Byzantium, most probably to Constantinople, is that the technique is used on items deriving from that city. One example is a large dish from Malaja Perecepina, which was made in several parts and then assembled,



**Figure 6.2** Reverse of the pendant on the Olbia necklace.

stamped and dedicated to Paternus in Constantinople during the reign of Anastasius. It was most probably at this stage that the medallions with inlays in cement technique were also added (Arrhenius 1985, pp. 126ff.).

Another important piece is the rectangular gold paten with this same type of cloisonné found at Gourdon, France, together with a chalice and Byzantine *solidi* (Arrhenius 1985, p. 70). The paten has its closest parallels in Byzantine silverware, where the same kind of heavy beaded rim is found. Other cloisonné jewellery of Byzantine origin is found in the treasure from Olbia (Fig. 6.1), with earrings of typical Byzantine shape and a garnet pendant which has on its reverse a palmette design of Byzantine type (Fig. 6.2). Finally, there is the diptych from Milan, cut in ivory but with an *Agnus Dei* in this sort of garnet cloisonné (Fig. 6.3.). Because of the garnet cloisonné alone





Figure 6.3 The centre of the Milan diptych (after Volbach 1976).

Volbach (1976, p. 84) has concluded that this work came from a workshop in Ravenna, but in my opinion it is much closer to ivories cut in Constantinople – for example, there are close parallels with the border patterns of the diptych of Philoxenus from Constantinople (Volbach 1976, no. 30). There are no true parallels for the Italian garnet work (Arrhenius 1985, p. 115). I also believe that the beautiful garnet work from Apahida and from Childeric's grave was originally of Byzantine manufacture. In the case of the sword from Childeric's grave, the lower guard seems to have been remounted to fit a Germanic design (Arrhenius 1985, p. 102).

There is a marked difference between the frequency of jewellery items in a production area and in a consumption area. In the production area there will always be a marked tendency to rework jewellery according to the latest fashion, whereas in a consumption area there is a tendency to keep jewellery longer – that is, also to use it as antiques. Elsewhere (Arrhenius 1985), I have expressed this as the law of the accumulation of archaeological artefacts due to inadequate techniques for their reuse.

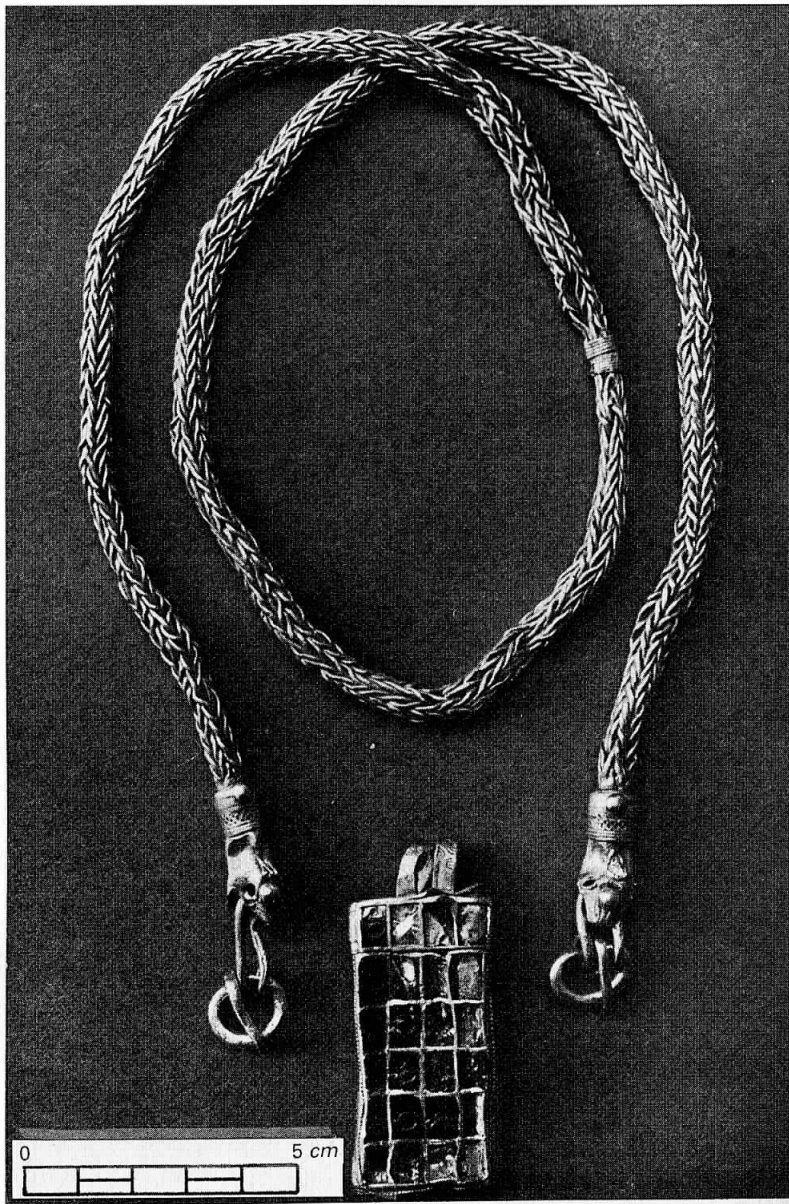
### Byzantine jewellery found in Scandinavia

Jewellery items of sufficiently high quality to reach Scandinavia are not abundant, but there are some very significant items. The necklace from Hesselager on Fyn (Fig. 6.4 & Voss 1951) consists of a plaited golden chain terminating in animal heads and a pendant made of a rectangular capsule set with garnets with engraved circles. This jewellery has all the qualities that could be expected of an imperial gift. The animal-headed terminals of the necklace can be compared to the terminals of the Olbia find (Fig. 6.1). The pendant consists of three tubes on the front, covered with cloisonné settings. As Voss has shown, the pendant has connections with inkbottles of late Roman manufacture (1951, p. 157). It also recalls the so-called capsule reliquaries from late Byzantine times, which seem to have connections with this type of pendant (Stenberger 1958, p. 184).

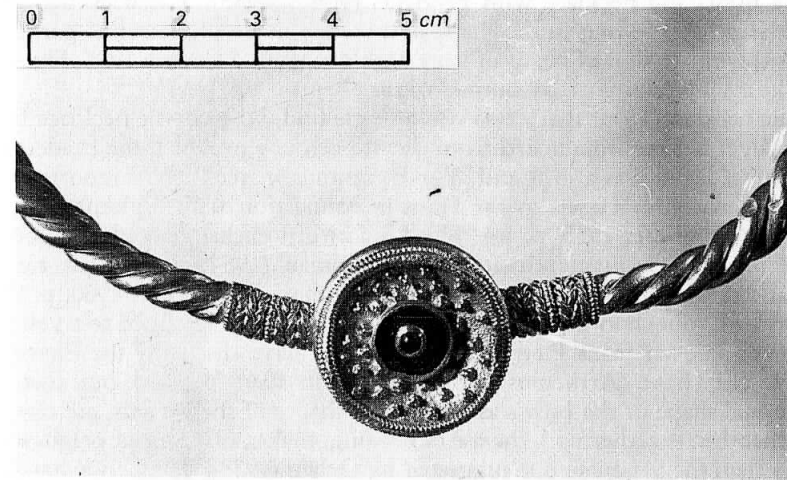
Another item of similar quality is the neckring from Ravlunda (Fig. 6.5). On the circular capsule there is a garnet setting made of a flat, pierced garnet with an inset garnet cabochon. I have discussed the occurrence of pierced garnets elsewhere (Arrhenius 1985, p. 70) and have compared the Ravlunda setting to the settings on a rectangular mount, probably part of a buckle, from Vienna. In both cases the garnets had been cut and mounted in Byzantium. The shape of the neckring with the round capsule is typical of Byzantine jewellery (Ross 1965, pp. 32, 35, 36) and is found here in the necklace from Olbia (Fig. 6.1).

On the reverse of the capsule is the clasp, consisting of a pear-shaped lock (Fig. 6.6). This shape of lock is often used in Germanic necklaces, the so-called *Wandalenringe* (Åberg 1936, p. 53), but it has its origin in Roman jewellery, the twisted golden bracelet from New Grange (Brailsford 1958, p. 14) being a characteristic example. More direct parallels to the Ravlunda ring are neck-

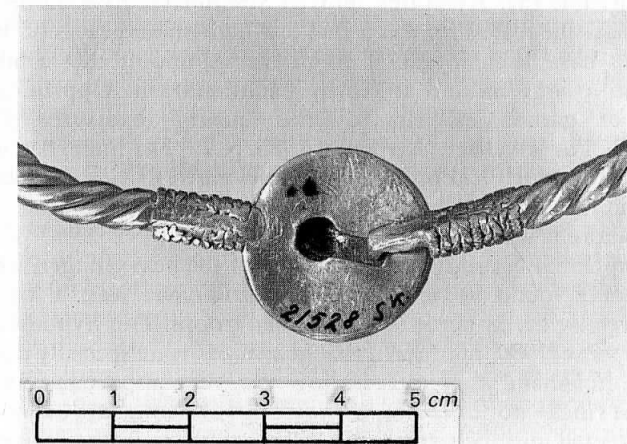




**Figure 6.4** The necklace and pendant from Hesselager (after Voss 1951).



**Figure 6.5** The neckring from Ravlunda.



**Figure 6.6** The pear-shaped lock on the Ravlunda ring.

rings from Cjeke-Cejkov (Steuer 1985) and Randsern (La Baume 1934), although the neckring from Czeke-Cejkov is not of the same high quality and the setting is of green glass. It could easily be a Germanic copy, although the late Roman elements of the grave goods – for example, a Roman flagon, bowl, and sieve, a fragment of a *Diatret* glass, a glass plate, Roman pottery, a Kolben ring (see pp. 129–34), and a fingerring with black and white sardonyx setting – argue against this view. The only true Germanic items are ceramics

and a fibula and necklace with pendants (Steuer 1985). The neckring from Randsern has a setting in the shape of a rosette made of cloisonné garnet. It gives the impression of being of very high quality (La Baume 1934, Fig. 73c) and in my opinion is of Byzantine origin.

The neckring from Ravlunda was a single find, whereas the necklace from Hesselager belongs to a hoard from the 4th century in which the beaded rim of a silver bowl was also found. The Byzantine writer Priskos reported that the emperor gave vessels to the Huns in connection with diplomatic transactions (Doblhofer 1955, p. 46). This kind of gift exchange could, of course, have reached Germanic chieftains. As Näsman (1984, p. 105) has rightly remarked, the handle from Lunde, Fyn, Denmark (Albrechtsen 1960, p. 178), inlaid with cabochon-cut garnets *à jour*, most probably belonged to a vessel of the type known from Pietroassa (Fig. 6.7). I have discussed the Pietroassa bowls elsewhere (Arrhenius 1985, p. 48) and have pointed out that the octagonal shape of the bowls as well as the shapes of the garnets, are classical and that this, together with the use of beading, makes a Byzantine origin more likely than the Sassanian one suggested by Orbeli (1938). The Lunde handle is much simpler and shows no characteristics that give clear indication of origin. It has the same kind of clumsiness that is found on the small censer also with settings *à jour* from Desana (Bierbrauer 1975, Tav. XI, 2). I consider it to be of Byzantine manufacture, perhaps from one of the provinces.

It is remarkable that Byzantine finds in Scandinavia have all been part of hoards. Perhaps the reason for this is that few high-status graves of the 4th and 5th centuries have been found. It might be significant that a 6th-century cremation in a large mound at Husby Långhundra in Uppland contained fragments of garnet jewellery of this quality (excavated 1977, but unpublished). The jewellery (Arrhenius 1985, p. 70) had huge, flat, extremely well-cut garnets which had probably once belonged to saddle-mounts of the type found in Apahida II. Obviously, this garnet jewellery had been kept for a long time before it was deposited in the grave.

Andersson (1985) has suggested that some of the heavy fingerings of gold with gemstones found in rich graves in Scandinavia were a kind of *dona militaria*, given by the emperor to his personal troops. This hypothesis is based on Alföldi's view (1980, pp. 176ff.) that gemstones were specially designed for the imperial house and its allies. It is, however, very important to realize that only the best rings – for example, with settings of gemstones of an extremely high quality – fall into such a category. Other finds strengthen this argument. Especially noteworthy, for example, is the beautiful black and white onyx used on the large, golden bow brooch with onion-shaped terminals from Simleul Silvaniei (Szilagy Somlyo). The onyx is surrounded by cloisonné settings of small garnets in rectangular cells. Here it seems most probable that the fibula had been manufactured on imperial commission in Pannonia (Arrhenius 1985, p. 130). The same kind of black and white onyx was also used on the chape of Childeric's *seax* (sword). As I have already mentioned, the garnet cloisonné on the weapons in Childeric's grave was most probably produced in Constantinople, and the occurrence of the onyx-inlaid chape



Figure 6.7 The handle from Lunde (after Albrechtsen 1960).

indicates that these weapons were originally gifts from the emperor. This fits very well with Werner's assumption that the golden fibula with onion-shaped terminals found in Childeric's grave, and probably worn on a *chlamys* (cloak), was originally a gift from the emperor (Werner 1971). The finds from Childeric's grave are, therefore, a good example of what an emperor of the East Roman Empire could offer a high-ranking Germanic chieftain in the 5th century.

The fingerings with settings found in Scandinavia are of varying quality. Some, such as that from Berga-Vrå (Fig. 6.8), have the ridged garnet cabochons which are typical of the Pannonian area (Arrhenius 1985, p. 44), and I am inclined to agree with Andersson (Andersson 1985, p. 136) that this ring, with its inscribed carnelian, is not of Scandinavian manufacture, as was originally proposed by Beckman (1969, p. 36), but was made in Pannonia. As I have already suggested, there was probably a workshop producing jewellery on commission from the emperor in Pannonia. Alföldi has emphasized the growing importance of Pannonia in the 3rd century, when emperors as well as soldiers were recruited from this part of the Roman Empire (Alföldi 1967, pp. 228ff.). Roman factories in Pannonia seem to have continued into the 4th century and played an important role in gift exchange between the Roman state administration and the army. Thus the Pannonian fingerings may, as Andersson has proposed, be a part of imperial gift exchange. However, there is also evidence of a more direct connection with Byzantium. The heavy ring from Fullerö (Fig. 6.9), with its eye-shaped bezel made of a carnelian of unusually high quality, is I believe, an East Roman import. The eye-shaped

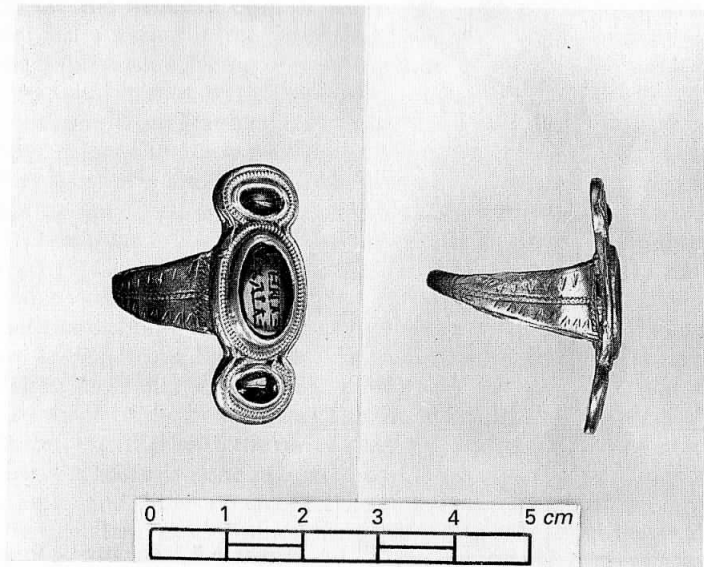


Figure 6.8 The fingerring from Berga-Vrå.

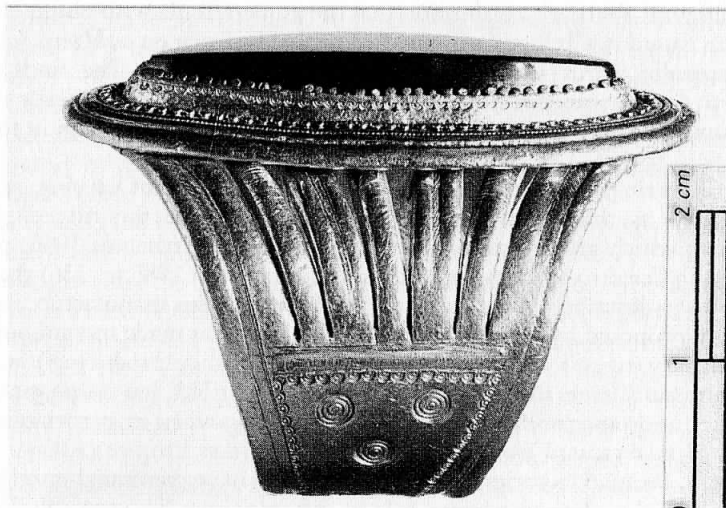


Figure 6.9 The fingerring from Fullerö, side view.

bezel is not common but occurs on late Roman rings, such as the one from the Tarsus hoard. This type of bezel continues to be used on Byzantine rings (Ross 1965, Figs. 70–80). The ring from Fullerö comes from a grave dated c. AD 400 (Arwidsson 1948).

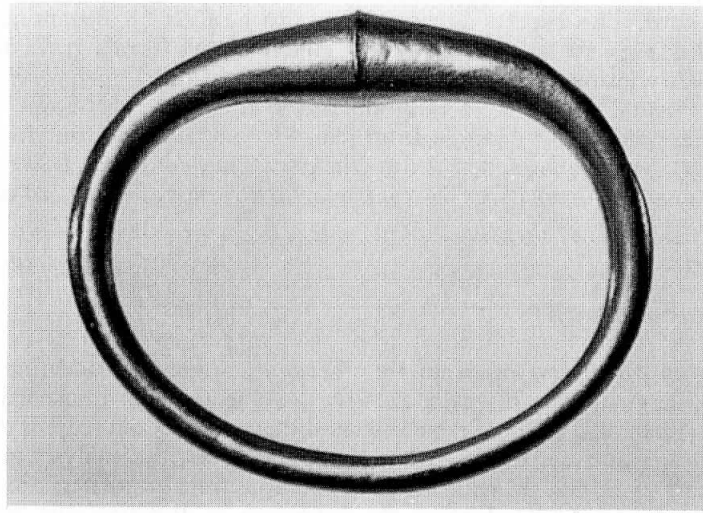
There seems, therefore, to be good reason to deduce that some of the fingerrings with stone settings from the 4th and 5th centuries found in Scandinavia were connected with imperial gifts. They could not, however, be called *dona militaria*, since true *dona militaria* did not exist after the 3rd century (Maxfield 1981, p. 248).

### The Kolben armlets

Heavy gold armlets are found among other objects in several *solidi* finds from Sweden. They consist of plain, massive gold rings with thickened ends. Werner (1980), like Kyhlberg, has discussed these armlets and regards them as Germanic products, made of melted *solidi*. However, the analyses given in Kyhlberg's work (Kyhlberg 1986, p. 70) do not, as he postulates, prove that they were made of *solidi*. Instead, the differences in the silver content could indicate different production centres. Some show a metal content close to those that Kovrig (1985) has published for items found in Hun graves. It is quite possible that some Kolben rings could have been produced by jewellers working for the Huns. Others could have been produced by Germanic jewellers.

The origin of these rings seems, however, to have been late Roman – that is, from the Byzantine empire. It is true that there are very few examples of this kind of armlet from the East Roman Empire, but the examples known indicate their importance there. Figure 6.10 shows a ring from a jewellery hoard found in Syria and rightly attributed by Ross (1965, p. 138) to Constantinople. The ring, which is hollow, is permanently closed, without an opening device. With an inner diameter of only 6.5 cm, it could not be taken off the arm of an adult without doing damage. As Werner has demonstrated (1980, p. 38), this is typical of Kolben armlets. From examples found in graves such as Himlingeöje on Seeland (Fig. 6.11), the armlets were used by men, who would not be able to take them off. This clearly indicates that they had a special function, perhaps as some kind of symbol of loyalty and fidelity. According to Werner the Kolben rings are entirely heathen (1980, p. 8). He has linked them with a pendant in the shape of an arm wearing an armlet which was part of a well-known necklace (Fig. 6.12) from Simleul Silvaniei (Szilagy Somlyo). This necklace had 51 other pendants, including a representation of a sword. Fremersdorf (1956) has published similar small pendants found in Roman graves from Cologne and has convincingly demonstrated that they are charms connected with the popular cult of Mithras, who had a particular following among soldiers. So, it is very probable that this necklace consists of a collection of charms used by the soldiers in the Roman army. The right arm, the sword arm with the armlet, and the sword might indicate



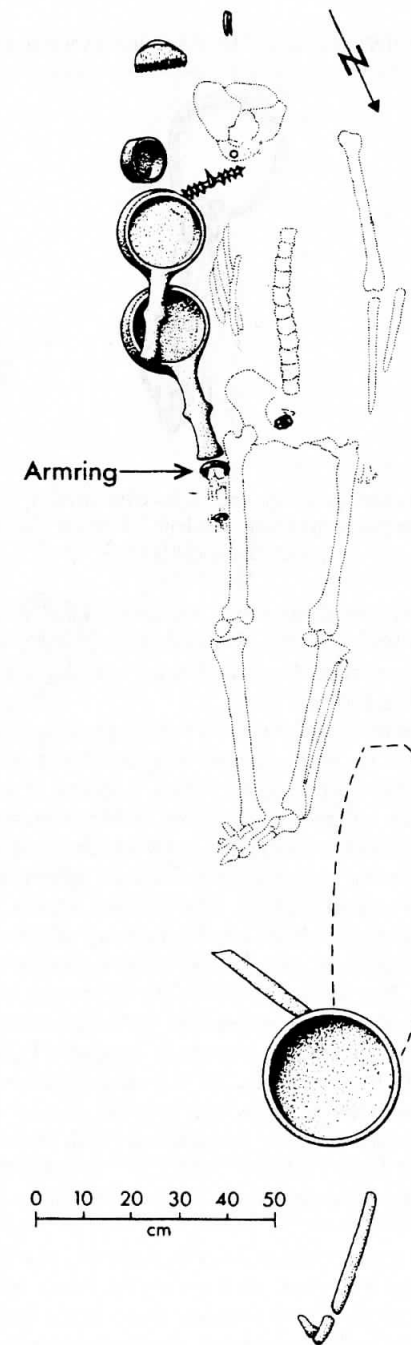


**Figure 6.10** A Byzantine Kolben ring (after Ross 1965).

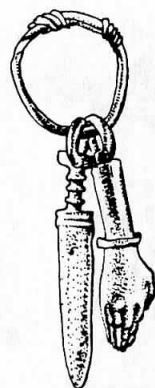
some kind of loyalty (or oath) given in connection with military service. As explained by Maxfield, military *armillae* were used as well as torques (1981, p. 90), and she repeats Procopius's account of how Belisarius gave his men both types of object (1981, p. 252).

I am inclined to think, therefore, that the use of the Kolben rings in Germanic contexts originated from late Roman practices which were taken over, more or less directly, by German chieftains. The spatial distribution of the Kolben armlets, together with finds as far away as the Black Sea area, is very significant (Fig. 6.13). As already seen, the published analyses give the impression that the Kolben rings were produced in several places, possibly including late Roman factories. Of special interest here is the hoard (maybe a grave find) from Lengerich, where two such rings were found, together with coins and a golden brooch with onion terminals inscribed *Romanus F(ecit) Remis* – Romanus made it in Reims (Zedelius 1987, p. 265). Late Roman production of weapons, textiles, and jewellery is known at Reims in the 4th century under the jurisdiction of the *Comes sacrarum largitionum* (Zedelius 1987, pp. 267ff.). It is possible, therefore, that Kolben armlets were also made in the West Roman Empire during the 4th century, although the later distribution seems to indicate a more easterly production.

It seems to me that the function of the Kolben rings was the same as described by Steuer for ring swords (1987, pp. 225), which might themselves be a Frankish development from these late Roman armlets. Steuer describes the *trustis dominica*, a group of warriors specially attached to the king through an oath, known from the *Lex Salica* (for Austrasia). The oath, which tied the men to the king, meant that they had to take part in his wars even though they did



**Figure 6.11** A Kolben ring *in situ* in a late Roman grave from Himlingeöje, Seeland (after Werner 1980).



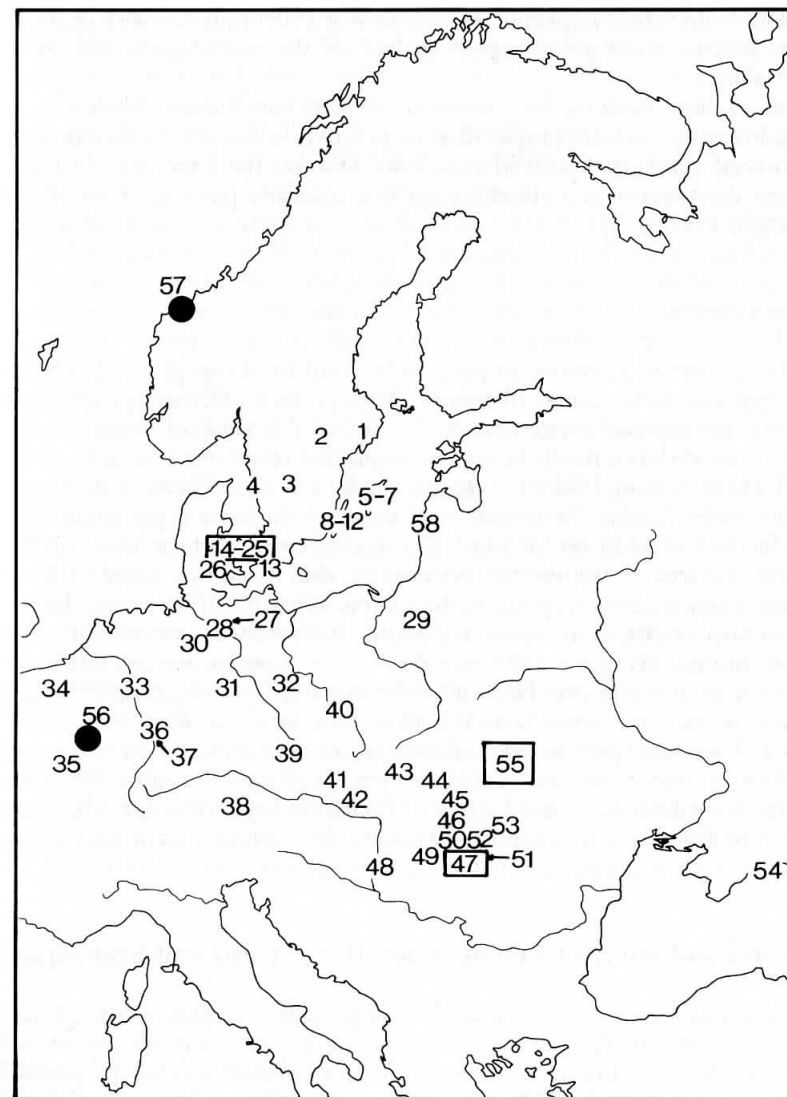
**Figure 6.12** Sword pendant and arm-with-armlet pendant from the necklace with pendants from Simleul Silvaniei (Szilagy Somlyo) (after Hampel 1905).

not live with him but in their own villages. The *trustis dominica*, who, according to Steuer (1987, p. 226), showed their loyalty to their leader (the *iudex* of the *trustis*) by wearing the sword ring, may have had their precursors among the men wearing Kolben rings.

In the earliest graves in Scandinavia in which these armlets are found, such as Himlingeöje (Fig. 6.11), grave goods also consisted of Roman vessels of glass and bronze, but there were no weapons. Loyalty in such cases may have been to a special family or group, without direct connection with warfare. There is, therefore, a marked difference between the Kolben armlets and the true Roman *dona militaria*, which were rewards given in connection with military duty only to Roman citizens. The Kolben armlet, on the other hand, was a sign showing membership of a special group of attendants.

I agree with Werner that the spiral snake rings found in northern Europe in the later Roman Iron Age are most probably Germanic copies of *armillae* of the type depicted on Roman tombstones as *dona militaria* (Werner 1980, p. 38). This suggests that Germanic people in northern Europe were aware of the function of these Roman insignia. As Rausing explains (1987, p. 130), it is quite possible that men from Scandinavia who joined the Roman army returned after their service to their homesteads with their *dona militaria* and, being Roman citizens, their children could also acquire them. He feels that many Roman imports of bronze vessels into Scandinavia can be explained in this way.

The jewellery with garnet inlays described above, the fingerrings, and the Kolben armlets belong, however, to a group of items which is in fact later than the true *dona militaria*. In my opinion these items had a special function within a ranking system and are evidence for connections either directly with the Byzantine empire or with chieftains outside the empire who used the same kind of ranking symbols. Here the use of *dona* in the Byzantine empire is of



**Figure 6.13** The spatial distribution of the Kolben rings (after Kyhlberg 1986, with some modifications; the numbers refer to the list in his publication).

interest. As Maxfield explains, the *dona* which Procopius says Belisarius gave to his soldiers were given not on behalf of the state but by the general personally.

The soldiers flanking the emperor on the base of the obelisk of the hippodrome in Constantinople all wear torques, in this case neckrings with a leaf-shaped pendant. Maxfield concludes that by the later part of the 4th century the torques had clearly become a standard piece of dress uniform (Maxfield 1981, p. 253).

### Glass vessels

The last group of Byzantine imports to be considered comprises glass beakers with polished oval facets, although it is, in fact, difficult to distinguish between eastern and western manufacture of this type of vessel. Straume (1987) even claims a north European origin for some of them, a hypothesis which requires more evidence before it can be accepted (Näsman 1984, p. 37). I agree with Näsman, however, that some of the later types occurring in Scandinavia are probably of Black Sea manufacture, and the most probable production area is within the borders of the Byzantine empire, since a Sassanian origin seems impossible. In comparison with other eastern imports, glass occurs much more abundantly and, with one exception – Forestads Mosse, Scania, (Straume 1987, no. 61) – glass goblets are never found in hoards or votive deposits. This cannot be due simply to the fragility of glass, because hoards are often found within containers of wood, ceramic, or bronze. Also, since glass vessels themselves seem sometimes to have been used as containers for bones and ashes in cremation graves (Straume 1987), their absence from hoards cannot be due to their fragility. Although glass vessels were sometimes repaired with gold sheets, they do not seem ever to have ranked as high as precious stones and gold jewellery.

### Imports and connections between Byzantium and Scandinavia

The Byzantine imports into Scandinavia probably arrived in the north on different occasions. The *solidi* could have come partly as a result of trade – for example, in fur – but their uneven distribution indicates, as proposed by Herschend (1980) and Kyhlberg (1980, revised 1986), that some of them at least were tribute or wages paid to Scandinavian soldiers or military chieftains. Similarly, the garnet jewellery and golden Kolben rings were probably gifts, either from the emperor or chieftains, inside or outside the empire. This would indicate that behind the individual items were men engaged in the politics of the Byzantine empire. Some of them, with their warriors, could have been the people who, when returning to Scandinavia, built fortifications of the Eketorp type known from Gotland and Öland (Engström 1984, Näsman 1976). Werner (1949) had already proposed for these fortifications a

connection between Byzantium and the Baltic islands, and recent research has supported his suggestion. As shown by Herschend (1985), the Migration period fortification at Eketorp itself most probably had an entrance port-cullis. Together with the regular layout, there are features which, at this period, can be found only within the Byzantine empire or in chiefdoms which had close connections with it. The possibility that lying behind the finds of Ravlunda-type rings or Kolben armlets were chieftains who perhaps had once been in Byzantium and had learned there to build a special type of fortification offers a new perspective. During military service, the building of fortifications was a task that involved all kinds of soldiers. However, the men who learned how to set out such a fortification would have been of high rank, and this would explain the value of the jewellery they could bring home.

These men could also have brought home with them other skills, such as new agricultural techniques, and this is an important direction for future research. The connection with Byzantium was not casual and seems to have continued from the late Roman Iron Age into the Viking period. There are 18 Byzantine coins (2 of gold, 4 of silver, and 12 of copper) known from Sweden, dating from between 565 and the reign of Leo VI (886–912). No less than 616 Byzantine coins have been found from the following period, 945–1071 (Malmer 1988, p. 28). Garnets from the Black Sea area are also known to have been imported from the end of the 7th century (Arrhenius 1985, p. 36), and we know of Byzantine textiles in early Viking graves. Hägg's (1983, pp. 213ff.) suggestion that the 9th-century Viking inhabitants of Birka were well aware of Byzantine dress fashion as well as its ranking values is a very convincing one. Although material from the late 6th, 7th, and 8th centuries showing Byzantine connections is scanty, it is nevertheless likely that behind the flourishing Byzantine influences in the Viking period were traditions deriving from the Roman Iron Age which had their climax in the Migration period.

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## 7 New research on finds of Avar chieftain-burials at Igar, Hungary

GYULA FÜLÖP

### Introduction

No account of the Avar period can avoid dealing with the finds of chieftain-burials at Igar (Fig. 7.1). The references in the archaeological literature are based on Nándor Fettich's (1929) published plates, and dating and ethnic characterization of the finds and their archaeological range are also based on this book. Two different opinions exist, however, both based on the *solidus* in the Tótipusztá find. According to one view, the Igar finds date to the middle third of the 7th century – that is, the early Avar period. The other view is that they date to the last third of the 7th century and belong to a newly established ethnic group. Fettich's publication, unfortunately, is not a satisfactory basis for research, because it is incomplete. It neither publishes all the finds, nor states the circumstances of discovery. I have recently reconsidered and republished the finds from Igar, and in doing so I have used as sources former archaeological publications, museum inventories, researchers' records, information

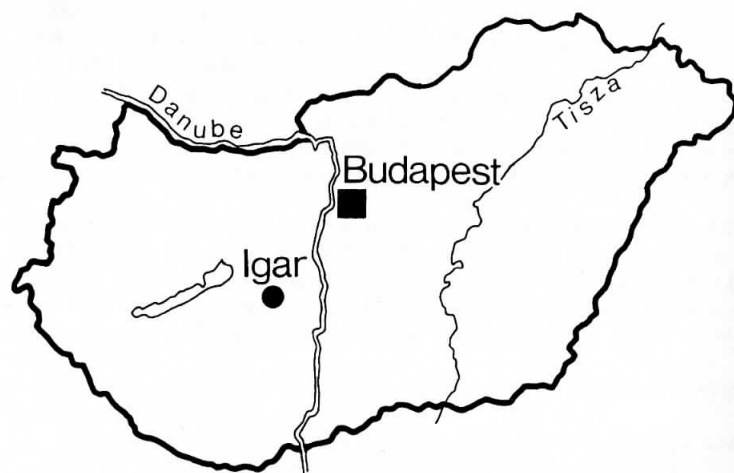


Figure 7.1 Hungary, showing the location of Igar.

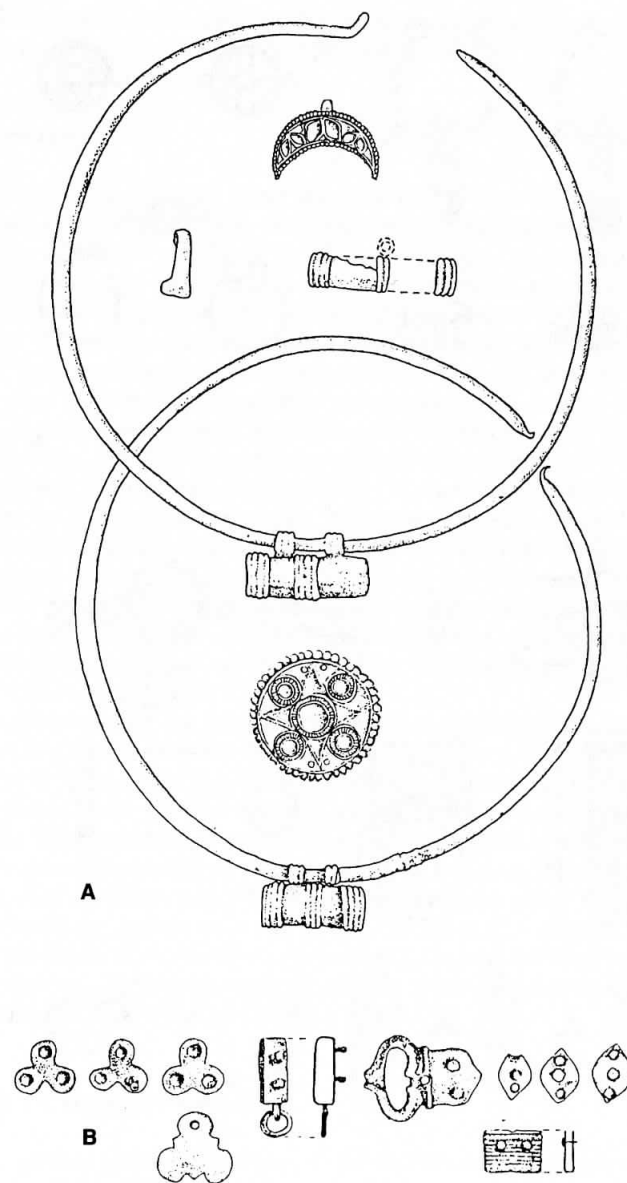


Figure 7.2 The 1898 finds: A, gold and silver jewellery from female graves; B, bronze buckle and silver belt-mounts from male grave.

from archives, and conversations with the descendants of those who witnessed the original excavations (see Fülöp 1987 for details).

### The cemetery

The gold objects from Igar came into the Hungarian National Museum in three stages. First, in 1898, there were the finds made during road-making and collected by a local doctor (Fig. 7.2). They consisted of objects from the graves of three women (or girls) and a man. In addition, a necklace including melonseed-shaped beads, which was sold to the museum in 1900, belonged to this group. Two silver torques, with golden pendants, glass beads with silver pendants, and a silver axe, are from the three female graves. The proper attribution of a golden disc and lunula is uncertain. A bronze buckle, silver belt-mount, and a silver loop form parts of a man's belt.

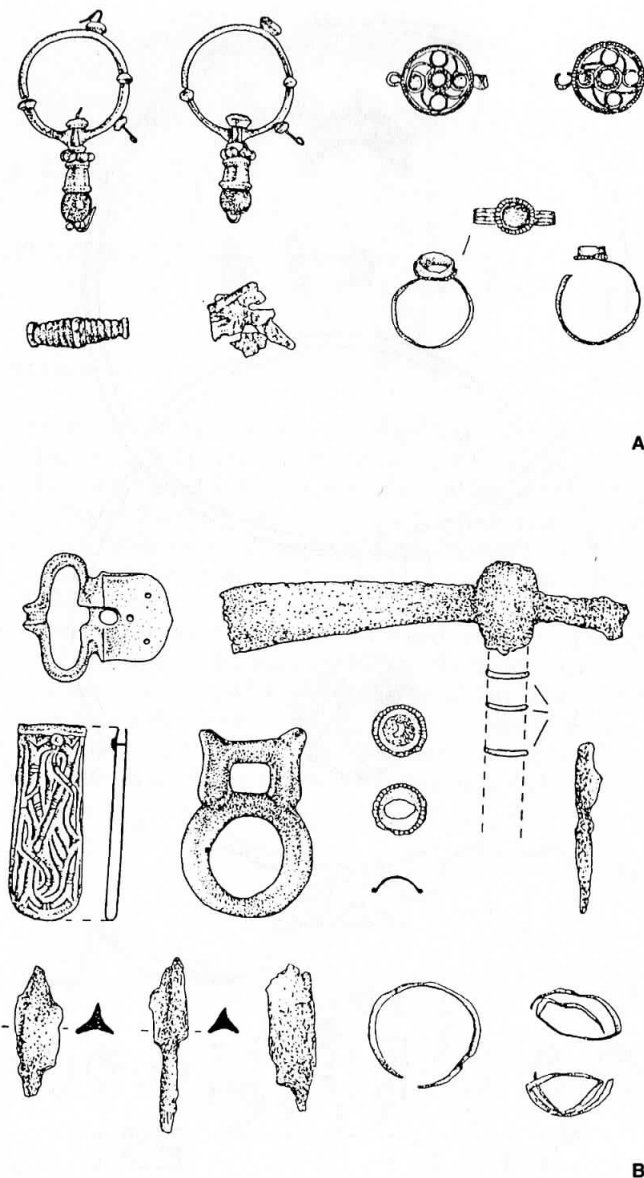
In 1923, when the field along the same road was being divided into building plots, earth was removed from the hillside. The graves of the second group of finds came to light on the site later, when houses were being built in 1927 (Figs. 7.3 & 4). One part consists of gold jewellery from a female grave and the other of items from the grave of a man and his horse buried together.

The third group of finds came to light during building on the same site in 1928. The grave belonged to a man buried in a coffin, with his gold and silver belt and earring, hairplate ornament, sabre, silver cup, pottery vessels, and iron sickle all together (Figs 7.5, 6, & 7).

Despite the fact that the finds were made on three separate occasions, they are all part of a family cemetery, which was located on the northern side of the marshy flood plain of the River Sió, on the southern slope of a hillside. Only the circumstances of the third group's discovery were authenticated by an expert; the other two finds involved art dealers. This is why the first two groups are incomplete: objects made of pottery, bone, and iron, which seemed worthless to the dealers, were discarded. The finds are richer than is usual and must represent the graves of a chieftain's family and its dependants. On the available evidence, the cemetery appears not to have been used for more than two generations. The graves were situated at some distance from each other, as is usual in the cemeteries of the Avar period.

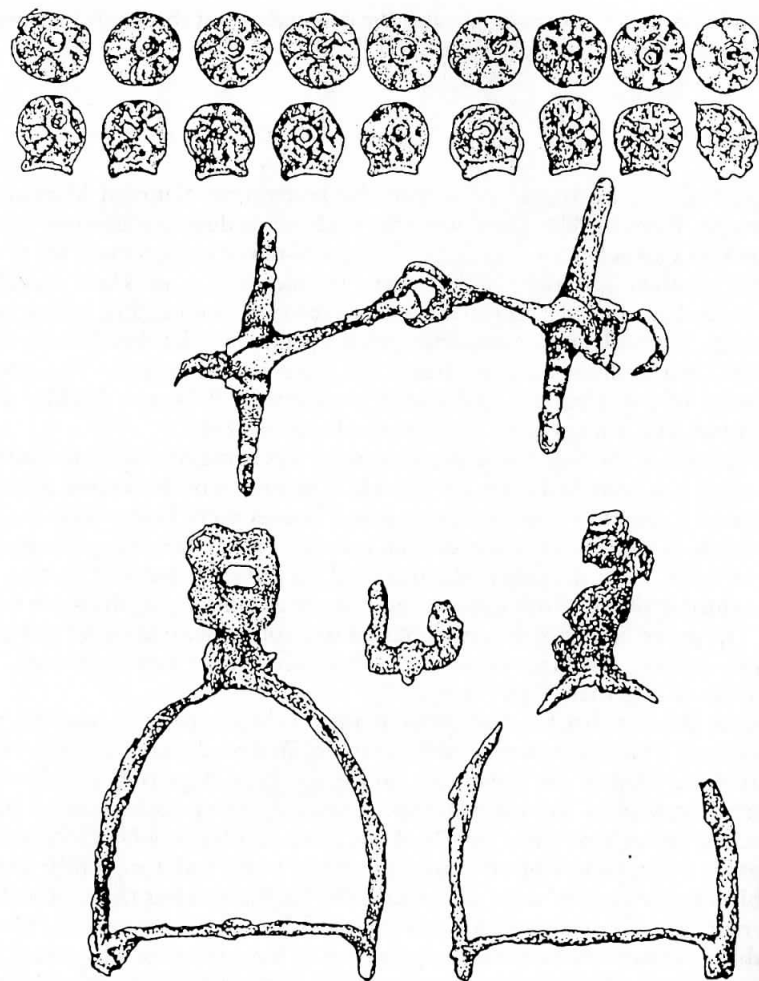
### Analysis of the grave goods

There are no data on the orientation of the burials, but the depth of the graves was about 3 metres. By comparison, in the cemeteries of Avar commoners even the graves of the most distinguished people were dug only to a depth of 2–2.5 metres. At Igar the dead were buried in coffins: there were traces of gilding on some of the coffin fittings from the third group of finds. The warrior of the second group was buried together with his harnessed horse (Fig. 7.4). An axe-adze, a bow, and an arrow from his weaponry were put



**Figure 7.3** The 1927 finds: A, gold jewellery from female grave; B, buckle and belt-fittings, axe, arrowheads, and other objects from male grave with horse.

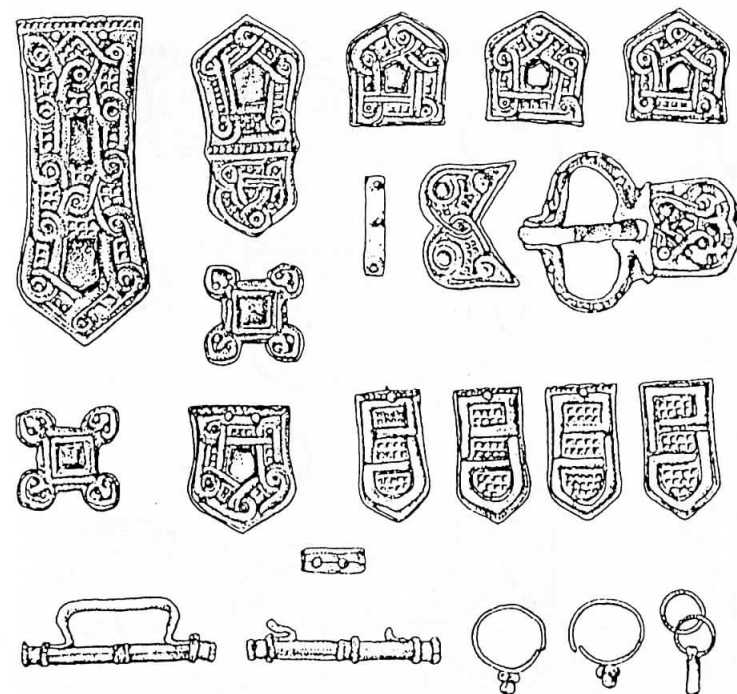




**Figure 7.4** The 1927 finds: horse bit, stirrups, and other fittings from man-and-horse burial.

beside him (Fig. 7.3). Horse bones from the third group may either indicate a partial horse burial or have been placed in the grave as food offerings. Food was also put in pottery vessels beside the dead man. The sickle from the third group reflects a superstition connected with iron: sharp, pointed, iron objects were put beside the dead to protect them against evil spirits (Fig. 7.7). The small silver axe of the first group, which could have been hung as an amulet round the neck, refers symbolically to the same concept.

All the dead were buried fully dressed and the men were armed. The women wore earrings, torques, rings, and breast clasps. The lack of bracelets is

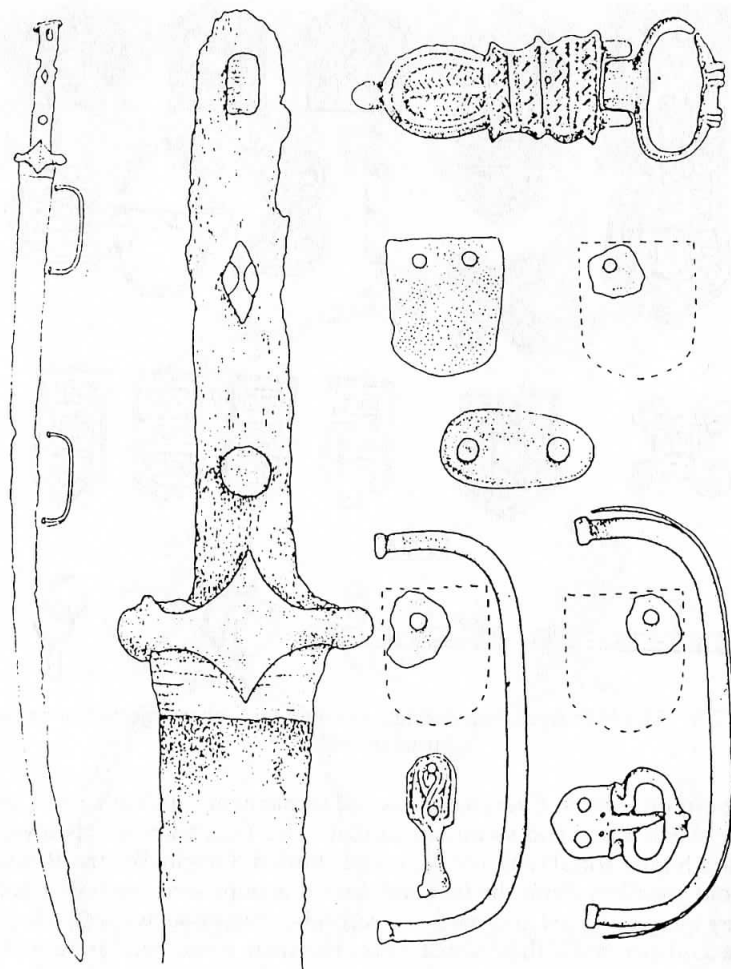


**Figure 7.5** The 1928 finds: belt-fittings, earrings, and other objects from rich male burial in coffin.

an uncommon feature. Everyday tools and implements, such as knives, spindle whorls, needle cases, and so on, are absent. This fact, taken on its own, may indicate a higher social rank for the people buried. Originally, the Byzantine-style gold jewellery from the first and second groups were parts of a necklace but they were unlinked and used in a secondary function as breast clasps.

In accordance with their social rank, the men wore belts mounted with precious metal. There were earrings and hairplates near the man from the third group. This was the attire of a nobleman of the steppes.

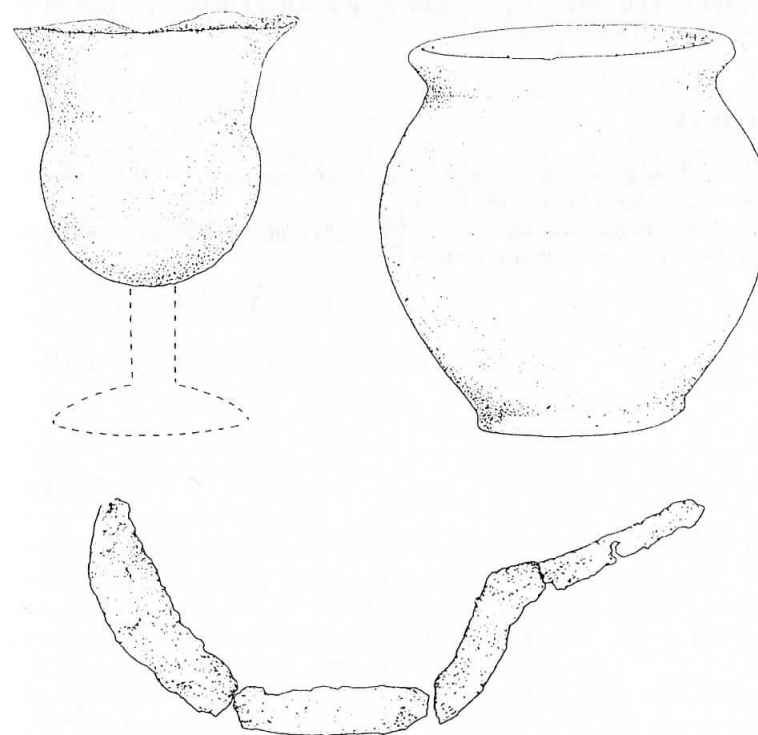
On the basis of their association with similar objects, the finds can be dated to the last third of the 7th century. The graves are closely related to the site at Ozora-Tótipuszt, which is located 6 kilometres from Igar and is dated by a *solidus* of Constantine IV, minted between 668–673. Parallels for the torques and breast clasps from the female grave at Igar also exist at Ozora-Tótipuszt. Exact parallels for the sabre from the third group and the bit from the second group also came to light there. The jewels from the female graves are either the antecedents or the contemporaries of those from late Avar cemeteries dated to the 8th to 9th centuries. The same holds true for the men's jewellery: the earrings and hairplates. The chain pattern of the gold-mounted belt from the third group is comparable with the ornament on the third and fourth jugs



**Figure 7.6** The 1928 finds: sabre, and belt- and other fittings from male coffin burial.

from the late Avar princely treasure at Nagyszentmiklós, for which the beginning of the 9th century is the earliest possible date.

All the objects from Igar are related to the late Avar period, having no definite connection with those early Avar remains which are dated by Byzantine coins to the 6th and 7th centuries. They are dated by the grave *oboloi* cut out of round gold plates as substitutes for coins: this occurred after 670, in the period following the influx of Byzantine coins.



**Figure 7.7** The 1928 finds: silver cup, pottery vessel, and iron sickle from male coffin burial.

### Conclusion – Avar migration

On the basis of archaeological evidence, it has long been known that new ethnic groups came from the east to the Carpathian basin in the last third of the 7th century. From written sources it is also known that Kuber, one of the sons of Kuvrat, together with his people, became the dependants of the Avar Khagan and moved to Pannonia after the disintegration of the Onogrian Bulgarian state in south Russia. Although some elements in the newly arrived people's archaeological remains, such as yellow pottery and sabres, point to an origin in Central and Middle Asia, others derive from the region of the Caucasus and the rivers Volga and Don. Their material remains and the variety of burial customs indicate a variety of ethnic components. The Avar Khagan settled the new peoples along the border of the Avar settlement area, as was usual on the steppes. Finds actually surround the early Avar settlement area, although they can scarcely be found in the centre. It was at this time that the basin of Vienna and the southern territory of Slovakia became part of the

Avar empire. The family represented at Igar would have been that of one of the newly settled people's chieftains.

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## 8 *Early medieval hillforts in Polish lands in the 6th to the 8th centuries: problems of origins, function, and spatial organization*

ZBIGNIEW KOBYLINSKI

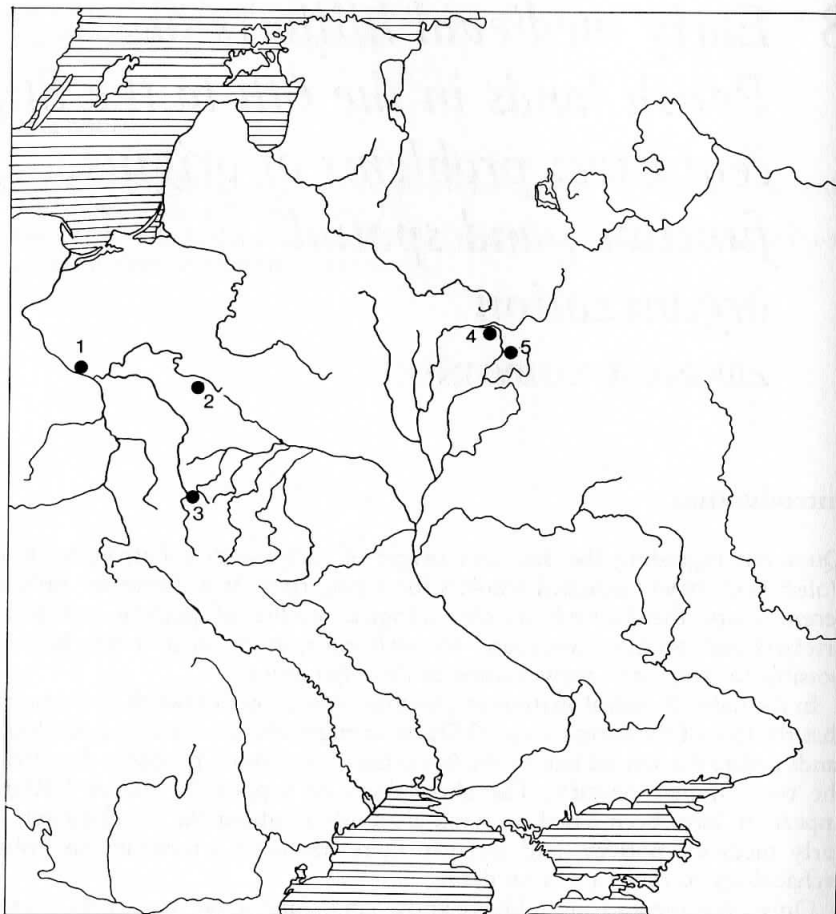
### Introduction

Questions regarding the date and origin of early medieval strongholds in Polish lands have fascinated scholars for a long time. It is, however, only in recent years, thanks both to chronological studies of pottery and metal artefacts and to new systematic research excavations, that it has become possible to attempt to answer some of these questions.

In the light of critical analysis of previous reports on fieldwork, it is evident that the first of the early medieval Slavic strongholds did not appear in Polish lands before the second half of the 6th century, and more probably date from the turn of that century. The chronology of supposedly earlier hillforts appears to have been based on weak assumptions about the development of early medieval pottery, and recently there has been a tendency in Polish archaeology to revise previous dating.

Only a few early strongholds are known in Poland so far (some 8 to 10 sites, possibly dating from phase A of the early Middle Ages, that is, the later 6th and the early 7th centuries). These are distributed in only two macroregions: eastern and northern Mazovia and Podlachia (hillforts at Szeligi, Radzikowo, Nidzgora, Niewiadoma, and Hacki), and the western part of Poland (hillforts at Polupin, Bonikowo, Smolno) (Fig. 8.1). While the chronology of the first group, and in particular the strongholds at Szeligi (province of Plock) and Hacki (province of Bialystok), is more certain, thanks to the discovery of metal artefacts similar to those known from early Avar cemeteries, the chronology of the second is not so certain. It is possible that the hillforts in that group date to no earlier than the first half or even the middle of the 7th century. It is unlikely that any hillfort in the southern and northern parts of Poland is that early.

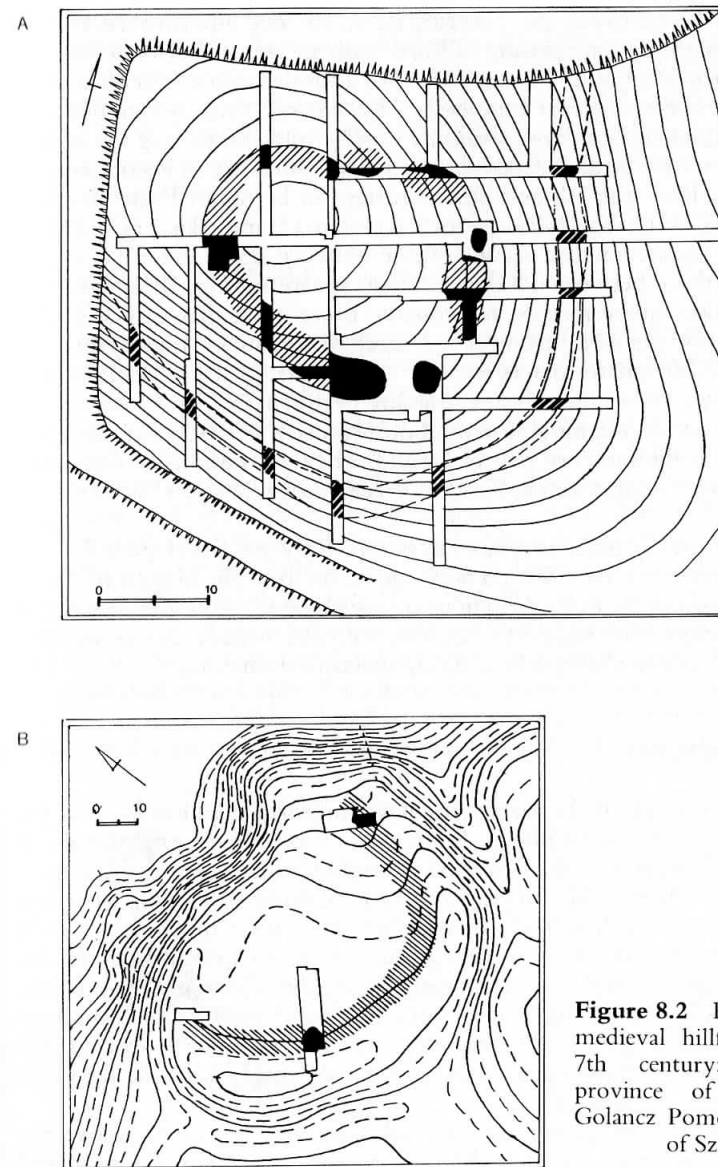




**Figure 8.1** Location of main sites discussed in text: 1 Szeligi, 2 Hacki, 3 Zimne, 4 Demidovka, 5 Tushemla.

### Hillfort size

All the earliest hillforts in Poland, dating from the end of the 6th and the first half of the 7th centuries, belong to one size category: between 1500 and 3500 square metres. The size range in hillforts of the second half of the 7th and the 8th centuries (phase B) is much wider (Fig. 8.2). In the western part of Poland very small strongholds, such as Gostyu (Fig. 8.2a), of between 500 and 700 square metres and medium-sized ones of between 3000 and 5000 square metres both operated at the same time (HilczeroŃna 1967). In Lower Silesia, according to the data gathered by M. Kaletyn *et al.* (1968), 40 of the earliest



**Figure 8.2** Plans of early medieval hillforts from the 7th century: A Gostyn, province of Gorzow; B Golancz Pomorska, province of Szczecin.

hillforts (from the 7th to the 8th centuries) can be divided into four size classes: first, the largest group, comprising hillforts with an area of between 400 and 1000 square metres; second, strongholds with an inner area of between 2000 and 4500 square metres (most frequently 3500 sq. m); third, strongholds of about 10 000 square metres; and, finally, a small group comprising the largest hillforts, between 20 000 and 30 000 square metres. Similarly in Pomerania, 43 hillforts dating from the 7th and 8th centuries can be divided into five size classes (Losinski 1981): first, hillforts, such as Golancz Pomorska (Fig. 8.2b), of less than 2500 square metres; second, those between 2500 and 5000 square metres; third, those between 5000 and 10 000 square metres; those between 10 000 and 20 000 square metres; and, finally, those more than 20 000 square metres. Almost 90 per cent belong to the three first groups – that is, they are all less than 10 000 square metres in area. In Mazovia and Podlachia all the hillforts from the 7th to the 8th centuries are between 1500 and 3000 square metres. In this period the biggest strongholds (more than 10 000 sq. m) were prevalent only in the southern part of Poland. The most famous among them are the enormous fortifications at Stradow, Szczaworyz, Krakow-Wawel, and Chodlik.

Despite this great range, in phase B of the early medieval period most strongholds were between 2000 and 5000 square metres. The biggest hillforts, which occur in southern Poland, seem to represent a quite different concept of social organization. The smallest ones, characteristic mainly of the western part of Poland, also probably had a highly specialized function.

### Internal structures

A common feature of all the earliest medieval hillforts in Polish lands is the character of their internal buildings. At present, we possess information about the inner spatial organization of over 30 strongholds, dating from the 6th to the 8th centuries. Almost all of them have traces of buildings only in a narrow zone close to the walls. It is likely that the buildings were touching, or even shared walls, as was the case at Szeliği and Hacki in Poland, and in the contemporaneous strongholds at Tornow in the German Democratic Republic and Zimne in Volhynia, USSR. The outer walls of the buildings were probably also part of the defensive wall. The central area of the stronghold seems to have been empty; as a rule there were no traces of occupation or other activities.

In most cases we can assume that the buildings were log cabins above the ground, but sometimes, as at Polupin (province of Zielona Gora) and Radzikowo (province of Plock), dwellings were entirely or partly sunk in the ground. Even where no traces of buildings were visible, the cultural layer still occurred only in a circular zone usually not more than 10 metres wide from the inner slope of the wall (e.g. at Siemowo, province of Leszno). There are only a few exceptions to this general rule. This means that human activities were concentrated within the buildings. Usually the cultural layer is thin and

poorly developed. Also, there are few traces of meat consumption, in contrast with the numerous bone assemblages from contemporary open settlements. From the evidence it is highly probable that these early strongholds were not inhabited permanently. Support for this hypothesis comes from information given by an Arab writer of the 10th century, Al-Gardhizi, who reports that Slavic fortresses were inhabited only when there was danger of Magyar raids (Macartney 1930).

### Excavations at Hacki

The results of excavations by the author in 1986–7 at Hacki, in the province of Bialystok in Podlachia, highlight problems of chronology, function, and construction of the earliest medieval central European strongholds. The hillfort was situated on a natural postglacial hill lying in the wide, damp valley. Earlier excavations in 1971–4 by Wojciech Szymanski suggested a tentative 6th-century date, and led to the discovery of traces of buildings adjoining the inner face of the defensive wall. The 1986–7 excavation examined the wall zone and the upper part of the slope in the southern and the eastern areas of the hillfort (Fig. 8.3). It appeared that only the wooden stockade, supported from the inner side with a stone rampart, belonged to the earliest phase of the early medieval period. The only traces of buildings discovered were the lines (at least three) of double postholes close to the rampart and surrounding the empty area in the middle of the stronghold. A large assemblage of handmade pottery of the post-Zarubintsy culture is connected with this phase. This archaeological culture tends to be dated to

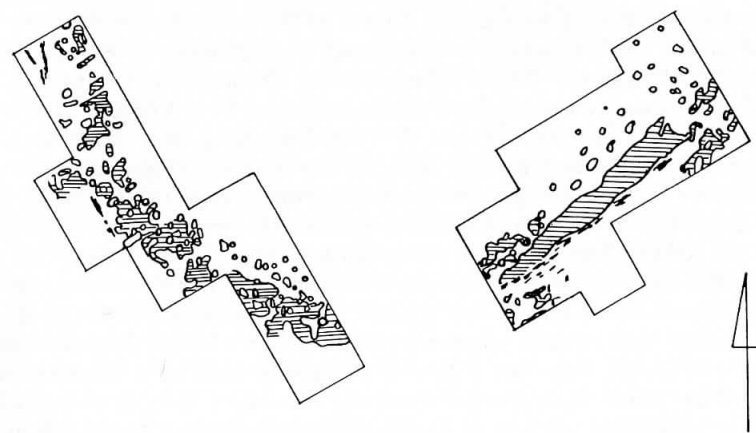


Figure 8.3 Hacki: stone rampart and postholes in the southern part of the hillfort. (Scale 20 metres.)

between the 2nd and the 4th centuries, but may be as late as the 5th century in Byelorussia, the northern Ukraine, and various areas to the northeast. The pottery, together with some metal finds, especially strap-ends recalling artefacts of the early Avar culture, testifies to the early date of the stronghold, which is probably one of the first in Polish lands.

An arrangement of double postholes in the peripheral zone of the hillfort allows reconstruction of buildings inside the defensive wall. Most probably these relate, as at the contemporary hillfort at Szeligi, to wooden log cabins. Their walls were placed between the two posts. The outer walls were at the same time an additional element in the defensive construction. We have not found any traces of permanent occupation in the strongholds, and most probably it functioned only as a place of refuge. However, at Hacki, as at some other contemporary hillforts, many traces of specialized if temporary activities, such as jewellery-making and weaving, have been found. This suggests that defence was not the only function, and maybe not even the most important one.

### Organization of the community

In contrast to the internal spatial organization of settlements in the late period of Roman influence (3rd–5th centuries), when in many cases we can observe clear differences in the social status of the inhabitants of particular dwellings, in the first of the early medieval hillforts all the buildings are of the same size, construction, and layout. Moreover, the distribution of precious goods which could be considered as status symbols, such as bronze ornaments, is usually quite even within the hillfort. All this seems to indicate that the strongholds fulfilled the needs of complete local communities, not merely chosen groups of higher social position. That the joint labour of the whole community would be used in the construction of a stronghold is confirmed by Al-Gardhizi's information (Macartney 1930). This can also be indirectly confirmed by the visible tendency to minimize the effort required by locating a stronghold in a naturally isolated place. From the very beginning, the early medieval strongholds were located in two different environmental zones: either the natural peaks of high terraces or the low, damp meadows and bogs. The choice depended on the basic pattern of the natural environment in a region and on the relative frequency of both landscape forms (Szymanski 1969).

Some hillforts from this earliest phase seem to present intermediate forms between open settlements and strongholds. This is true of sites located on the tops of natural high terraces where they were separated from their surroundings by a ditch on only one side and eventually also by a wooden wall supported by posts. This was the situation at Szeligi, for example, and at Barkowice Mokre, in the province of Piotrkow. Sometimes a naturally steep hill, chosen as a settlement site, was artificially elevated and surrounded by a wooden wall, as happened with the hillforts at Hacki and Radzikowo. In Lower Silesia, on the rivers Nysa Luzycka and Wodra, the earliest strongholds

appeared during the 7th and the 8th centuries in naturally isolated places, where previously open settlements had existed.

### Hillforts in the settlement system

In the period in question the smallest settlement systems at the macro level might consist of the stronghold itself, with some open settlements situated in the vicinity, as was the case at Szeligi, Wyszogrod and Niewiadoma in the Mazovia region, in western Pomerania, and in Lower Silesia. Alternatively, a permanently inhabited stronghold might be the only element of such a settlement system. This possibility, as suggested by some for the Obra river basin in western Poland, is entirely hypothetical; only systematic fieldwork in the area surrounding a hillfort can demonstrate its likelihood. It should also be remembered that the paucity of archaeological remains for open settlements from that period may be responsible for such a conclusion.

More reasonable, therefore, are inferences drawn from the spatial analysis of the distribution of the first early medieval hillforts themselves. We can assume that we have information about all the relevant sites; the only problems are to establish an accurate chronology.

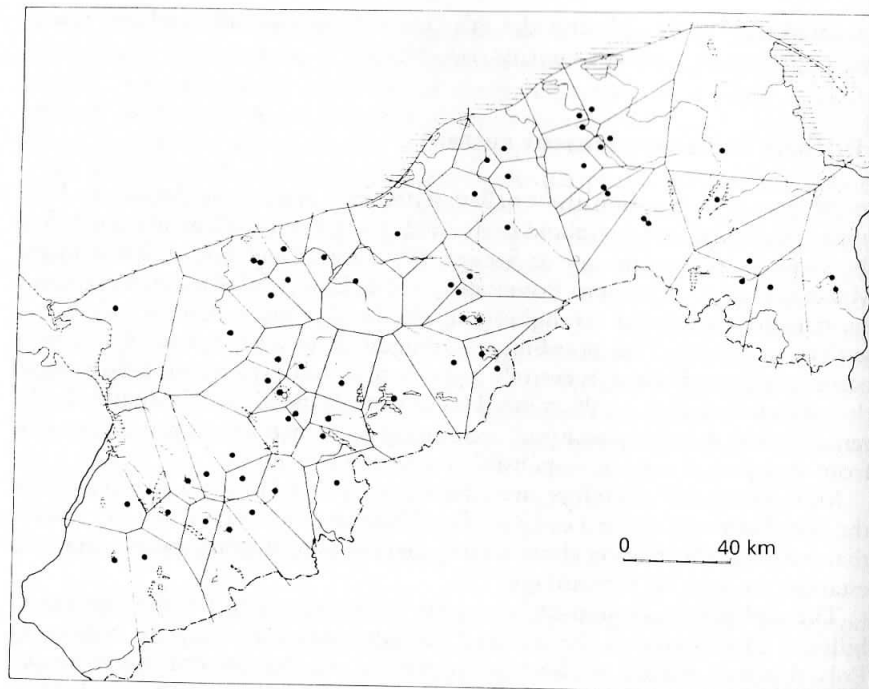
The striking conclusion to be drawn from analysis of the distribution of hillforts dated between the 6th and the 8th centuries in various regions of Poland is that usually, within the apparently random pattern, some smaller areas can be seen, characterized by the clustering of hillforts and the relatively higher regularity of distribution within the cluster. In such smaller regions the mean distance between hillforts within the cluster is usually about 10 kilometres. One can cite examples from the Obra river basin in western Poland or the hypothetical tribal territories of Trzebowianie and Dziadoszanie in Lower Silesia, or the hillforts on the Wodra and Lubsza rivers in western Silesia. A further example is the distribution of hillforts dating from the beginning of the 7th century and first half of the 8th century in Pomerania, as shown in Figure 8.4.

In these regions it seems that the territory exploited by the group inhabiting or using one stronghold was about 80 square kilometres, which could be interpreted as the tribal territory. It should also be stressed that Thiessen polygons drawn around the hillforts are usually smaller and more regular in the plains and big river valleys, and bigger and irregular in the highlands. This means that the pattern of stronghold distribution was probably closely related to the productive capacity of a given landscape zone and was not the result of deliberate, preplanned settlement action.

The results of the analysis of hillfort distribution and internal spatial organization seem to negate the theory that the origins of the earliest hillforts were directly connected with processes of social differentiation and feudalization in central Europe. On the contrary, they seem to represent rather uniform social concepts.

Most probably these strongholds were the central places for the territories





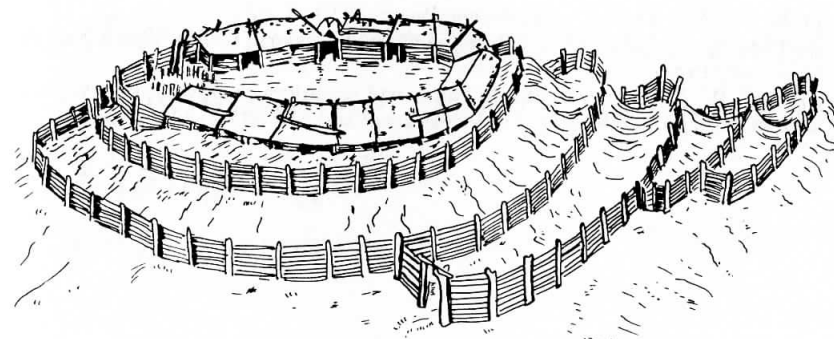
**Figure 8.4** Distribution of hillforts from the 7th to early 8th centuries in Pomerania.

of small communities. Their settlement function was probably not the most important one. Rather, they were places for various seasonal social activities and specialized handicrafts, such as bronze-working and jewellery-making. Certainly, they were also shelters for people, but usually they are too small to provide room for cattle as well. There is no evidence that they could be used to store food or grain, though this possibility cannot be excluded.

In some instances, most evidently at Hacki, where numerous burnt human bones were found, we can assume also that the earliest strongholds were places for religious ceremonies, connected with some as yet unknown burial rites. It could even be argued that in such cases the main reason for building a stronghold was of a symbolic rather than an economic or military character.

## Origins

The most interesting question is that of the origins of the earliest medieval hillforts in Polish lands. The settlement system in the preceding period included neither hillforts nor any other defensive structures. However, some striking parallels can be found east of the Polish lands. A close analogy for the



**Figure 8.5** Reconstruction of the stronghold at Tushemla, USSR (after V. V. Sedov).

layout and construction of the earliest medieval hillforts in Poland, and for those in Mazovia and Podlachia in particular, is the hillfort at Zimne on the Bug river, in Volhynia, USSR, dated to the end of the 6th century. The pottery assemblage from that site is related to pottery from the more northern region, where old Baltic cultural traditions were still alive. There, in the area of the so-called Kolochin-Tushemla-Akatovo-Pancrovshchina complex, hillforts from the 5th to the 7th centuries are numerous. These strongholds (among which the most important are sites at Tushemla and Demidovka in the Dnieper river basin) most probably predate the earliest Polish medieval hillforts. The stronghold at Tushemla (Fig. 8.5) functioned as a place of refuge and also, it is believed, as a centre for religious ceremonies, as did other sites from that cultural province. Their construction and inner layout are very similar to those of the hillforts at Szeligi and Hacki in Poland.

Moreover, in Byelorussia the tradition of building strongholds can be traced as far back as the times of the stroke-decorated pottery culture (2nd–4th centuries), and quite similar constructions can be found even earlier to the east of Poland, namely in the Baltic hillforts of Latvia from the second half of the 1st millennium BC. It is therefore highly probable that the earliest medieval hillforts in Poland are closely related in origins to their Byelorussian predecessors. Whether this also means that they should be considered as evidence for some population movement westwards in the middle of the 6th century cannot be answered at the moment. However, in the light of the evidence so far reviewed, it is highly probable.

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## 9 *What does coinage tell us about Scandinavian society in the late Viking Age?*

BRITA MALMER

### Introduction

More than 250 000 coins from the Viking Age have been found in Scandinavia, and most of them carry inscriptions which tell when, where, and for whom they were struck. These small, written sources of information can also be weighed and measured; they carry pictures and other graphic images; and they appear in very large quantities, suitable for statistical treatment. Thus they are both documentary and archaeological sources of information for Scandinavian society in the Viking Age.

### Foreign coins found in Scandinavia

In this brief survey of coinage and society in Viking-Age Scandinavia I will concentrate on coins struck in Scandinavia, which mainly relate to the late Viking Age. As a background, however, a few words about coins found in Scandinavia but struck outside might be useful, since these form the bulk of the 250 000 coins mentioned above.

About 35 per cent of the coins arriving in Scandinavia during the Viking Age were Oriental, mainly Arabic *dirhams* struck in the Caliphate. About 45 per cent were German and only about 17 per cent were English. The remaining few per cent were Byzantine, Frisian, Carolingian, Italian, Hungarian, or others. The import of coins started in the 8th century, and the first Arabic *dirhams* reached Scandinavia at the beginning of the 9th. The largest quantities of Arabic coins appear in hoards deposited as late as the 950s, but they consist mainly of Samanid *dirhams* struck in the period 895–920. The final peak started in the 990s and consisted of German and English coins. There are many hundreds of Scandinavian finds of coins of the Viking Age, most of them in Sweden and especially on the island of Gotland, in the middle of the Baltic. The size of the finds varies considerably, ranging from single coins up to several thousand specimens.

What does this tremendous quantity of imported coins tell us about Scandinavian society? Hitherto scholars have tended to discuss this question from three points of view: either the coins were a product of trade; or they

were the result of tribute and raiding; or they were a mixture of both. Sawyer has quite recently argued in favour of the second position (1982), although several scholars have leant towards a social rather than an economic standpoint (e.g. Randsborg 1980). The geographical distribution of the finds, for example, is supposed to reflect the richness or poverty of society. Size and composition of the finds are supposed to show different kinds of trade – for instance, big international commerce as opposed to small local tradesmen. Numismatists such as Metcalf consider the problem from the aspect of political economy, suggesting that there was a balance-of-payments surplus in Scandinavia in the Viking Age (1981), but if this was so, why was Scandinavia, and especially Gotland, exporting on a scale large enough to provide such a surplus?

This is a rather complicated discussion and cannot be considered here, but one thing ought to be emphasized: there is no single explanation that holds true for the whole of Scandinavia or for the whole of the Viking period. On the contrary, the picture is extremely heterogeneous. There seem to have been pools or enclaves of imported currency already circulating in the 8th century. Of these, a newly discovered and very interesting example is provided by the Frisian *sceattas* found in Ribe and Dankirke in southern Denmark, which were discovered individually in culture layers during excavation. They seem, therefore, to have been handled by the inhabitants on a more or less daily basis, which means that a kind of monetary economy might already have existed in towns or other densely populated areas in southern Denmark by the first half of the 8th century (Bendixen 1981). Other examples of these small pools of currency come from Paviken on Gotland and, to some extent, Helgö and Birka in middle Sweden.

On the other hand, outside these small pools of monetary economy there was probably no heavy or uniform circulation of coins, perhaps not even on Gotland (Lyon 1981). Gotlandic finds from the same area and with the same *terminus post quem* show quite different proportions of German and English coins. In a society with heavy coin circulation we would have expected the proportions to be the same. Indeed, large-scale studies of secondary treatment, especially peckmarks on German and English coins, tend towards the same conclusion (Svensson 1986).

Certainly the foreign coins will eventually tell us a lot more about Scandinavian society in the Viking Age, but this will not happen until the immense amount of data which they contain has been uniformly published and statistically analysed. Unfortunately, it will be a long time before this is achieved. Up to now only about 20 per cent of the Swedish finds in question have been published in detail. The eighth volume of the CNS series, *Corpus nummorum saeculorum IX–XI qui in Suecia reperti sunt*, has only just appeared, and the series as a whole will contain between 20 and 25 volumes. Therefore, it is quite understandable that many archaeologists occasionally lose patience and draw conclusions about society a little too hastily at the current state of our investigation.

Before going on to the subject of native Scandinavian coinage, it is worth



**Figure 9.1** Inscription of runes: Thur (name of the god Thor). *Dirham* struck in Samarkand 910–11 and found in a hoard from Mannegårda, Lye, Gotland (photo Gunnell Jansson, ATA, Stockholm).



**Figure 9.2** Graffiti of human figure (Valkyrie?). *Dirham* struck in al-Shash 904–5 and found in a hoard from Kvarna, Vamlingbo, Gotland (photo Gunnell Jansson, ATA, Stockholm).



drawing attention to the graffiti found on imported coins. More than 1100 graffiti have so far been registered, mostly on *dirhams* found on Gotland (Hammarberg and Rispling 1985). The graffiti are representations of Thor's hammer, swords and other weapons, ornaments, and human beings, and also very often include runic inscriptions, sometimes showing the words Thor and Kuth or God (Figs. 9.1 & 2). This is, one might say, the grassroots level of what coinage tells us about Scandinavian society: obviously, several people were using their *dirhams* for scribbling.

### Native Scandinavian coinage

#### *9th century, southern Scandinavia*

Native Scandinavian coinage starts with imitations of Carolingian Dorestad pennies and of Frisian *sceattas*. This early Scandinavian coinage has no inscriptions to say when, where, and for whom it was struck. However, by studying the pictures on the coins, their weight, their geographical distribution, and many other facts, it is possible to place the earliest Scandinavian coinage chronologically in the first half of the 9th century and geographically in southern Scandinavia, most probably at the town of Hedeby (Fig. 9.3). There is not much of this early coinage; we know of only about 100 specimens from less than 30 findspots. It is impossible to know for certain who was responsible for it and who might have profited by it – perhaps a king, but which king? Only one thing is clear: those who were responsible were strongly influenced by Carolingian coinage, especially with regard to weight. The earliest Scandinavian pennies weigh half as much as a contemporary Carolingian penny. They might be said to be Carolingian halfpennies, a denomination that was introduced by Louis the Pious, thus confirming a date in the first half of the 9th century for the earliest Scandinavian coinage. The striking of halfpennies seems to prove, therefore, some kind of monetary economy in Hedeby at this time, suggesting a rather well-developed society.

#### *10th century, southern Scandinavia and Denmark*

The earliest Scandinavian coinage was, however, only a parenthesis (Malmer 1966). There was a break of at least 50 years before a very sparse coinage started again, at the beginning of the 10th century, still imitating Carolingian pennies struck in Dorestad more than 100 years earlier, still lacking inscriptions saying where, when, and for whom they were struck, and still more probably produced in Hedeby (Fig. 9.4). The weight here was considerably lower than that in the earlier group, and kept being reduced. In the middle of the 10th century Hedeby was a German town, but nevertheless, its coinage still retained the same picture as before, and was without legends.

About 975 the output of the mint at Hedeby dramatically increased. The coins are thin as paper, weighing 0.3 grams or even less, and still lack inscriptions. Small and unpractical they form the main constituent of several hoards and are widely distributed, as far as northern Sweden, Poland, and



Figure 9.3 Map of mints in Scandinavia during the late 10th and early 11th centuries.



Figure 9.4 Southern Scandinavia, probably Hedeby, middle 10th century. Rough imitation of pennies struck for Charlemagne in Dorestad in the 8th century (photo, ATA, Stockholm).



**Figure 9.5** Probably Denmark, c. 975–80. The reverse is a rough imitation of a cross appearing on 10th-century Byzantine *milaresia* (photo, ATA, Stockholm).

Russia. There must have been some authority at Hedeby which was interested in a coinage of its own and which profited by it. That coinage must have been very easy to recognize when it turned up together with Arabic and German coins, even far away from Hedeby itself.

At the same time, about 975, another Scandinavian coinage started further to the north. As with the Hedeby coinage, inscriptions are lacking, so it is not known exactly where the new mint was situated, whether on Jutland, on the islands, or in Scania. This coinage seems to be Christian, since every coin has a picture of a cross on at least one side (Fig. 9.5), and it has been associated with Harald Gormsen, the Danish king who 'made all Danes Christian', according to his own words on a well-known runestone. The coins are small and thin, again weighing 0.3 grams or less, like the contemporary Hedeby coinage. The output was not insignificant: for a few decades this type of coin occurs frequently, with a distribution from Iceland to Russia. Such a Danish coinage, competing with Hedeby, fits very well with the political situation in the 970s and 980s.

In the 990s the Scandinavian issues minted without legends came to an end. The first Scandinavian coins with legends are imitations of the English crux-type and their production seems to have started when the crux-type was still current in England – that is, before 997, according to the accepted chronology. Remarkably, this first coinage with inscriptions started at the same time in all three Scandinavian countries – Denmark, Norway, and Sweden.

#### *11th century, Denmark*

The earliest Scandinavian coinage with inscriptions seems at first to be very limited in number, consisting of only a few specimens of crux imitations struck in the name of Sven Forkbeard, son of Harald Gormsen. In the last few years, however, this general picture has changed dramatically. By means of die studies and die chains, the known national Danish coinage from the 990s up to the 1020s has increased considerably. Two groups of coins have caused this enlargement: first, English-looking pennies with the picture and name of the English king Æthelred II and English mintnames, but which on closer examination turn out to be imitations struck in Scandinavia; and, second,

pennies with barbarous pictures copied from English Æthelred types and with unintelligible legends connected with the Danish coinage proper.

One die chain consists of no less than 92 dies – a very high figure (Blackburn 1981). Blackburn is cautious as to the location of the mint of this big chain, and his only statement is that it was situated somewhere 'east of the North sea and north of the Danevirke'. However, taking the whole of Scandinavia into account, Blackburn's big chain and connected coinages seem most probably to belong to the southern part of Scandinavia – that is, Denmark. Apparently there was a flourishing, well-made, English-looking coinage in Denmark by the first decade of the 11th century. The previous view, that there was a long break of more than 20 years between the sparse coinage of Sven Forkbeard in the 990s and the coinage of Cnut (from 1018), does not seem to be true. On the contrary, there might have been a more or less continuous Danish coinage from Harald Gormsen in the 970s onwards.

But there is still one problem. We cannot be sure where in Denmark all those coins were struck, because no Danish mint is mentioned in the legends. All the imitations in question are either unintelligible or carry the names of various English towns, including London, which has the same spelling as Lund. Indeed, the town of Lund in Scania might actually be the place of origin (Fig. 9.3), and recent investigations have shown that there is no objection, from an archaeological point of view, to identifying it as the mint for the Danish imitations of Æthelred coinage.

From Cnut onwards the coinage of Denmark is much easier to study (Malmer 1986). A framework is provided by coins carrying legible legends with the names of Danish mints, mostly Lund but also Roskilde, Slagelse, and others. A rather large number of unintelligible legends still appears, but by means of die linking it has been possible to tie many of these coins into the framework. There is a very interesting study, for example, of the coinages of Harthacnut and Magnus the Good (1040–46) in which about 400 dies can be related to the mint of Lund during a period of only six years – a high figure and one comparable to a big English mint (Becker 1981). There must, therefore, have been a great demand for native Danish coinage in the town of Lund in the 1040s, which indicates a well-developed monetary economy.

From a social point of view, the appearance of at least 21 personal names (Alfnoth, Alfwarth, Alwin, etc.) belonging to 21 different people, all engaged in the business of coinage in the town of Lund between 1040 and 1046, is fascinating. 'Moneyer' is the accepted label of a person whose name appears on the reverse of a coin, but we cannot be precise about the social position of these individuals in Lund during the middle part of the 11th century.

In another piece of research, Hårdh has published a thorough investigation of Viking-Age hoards from southern Sweden in which she shows that during the 10th century there was more hacksilver than coins in these finds and that the silver had been gradually divided into smaller and smaller pieces. During the 11th century the share of coins slowly increased until, in the middle of the century, finds without hacksilver began to appear. Obviously, hacksilver and native coinage were dependent on each other: the livelier the Danish minting,



**Figure 9.6** Olof 'Skötkonung', king of Sweden, c. 995–1022. Obv. legend: + OLAF REX SVEVO(rum); Rev. legend: + SNELLING MO ZIN(= Sigtuna) (photo, ATA, Stockholm).

the less the hacksilver. But, as Hårdh emphasizes, there are differences between various parts of southern Sweden, and the transition to a monetary economy took place gradually. Naturally, the move towards such an economy was faster in the town of Lund than in more distant parts of Scania (Hårdh 1976).

An interesting attempt to relate Danish minting in the 11th century to Danish administration has demonstrated the striking fact that western Denmark had several small mints while eastern Denmark was dominated by one very big mint at Lund (Andrén 1985). Andrén relates this to the fact that the private estates of the king were mainly situated in western Denmark while in the east was the crown estate ('kungalev'), which did not belong to the royal family privately. In order to get tax from eastern Denmark the king needed a special administration. Thus three phenomena – minting, administration, and tax collection – seem to be connected to each other: the more the administration and tax collection, the bigger the mint.



**Figure 9.7** Long Cross imitation with blundered legends, square flan, die linked to Sigtuna pennies with legible legends (photo, ATA, Stockholm).

#### *11th century, Sweden*

Swedish coinage starts nearly 200 years later than in southern Scandinavia – that is, in the 990s, with imitations of the English crux-type (Fig. 9.6). The coinage is centred on the town of Sigtuna, near Stockholm (Fig. 9.3), whose output, especially the striking of Long Cross imitations, was considerable. Most inscriptions are meaningless, but it is possible to relate them to the mint of Sigtuna either by die links or by the close relationship of pictures and letters. An extraordinary feature is the high proportion of square flans, up to 50 per cent of the Long Cross imitations (Fig. 9.7). The whole coinage looks primitive, with misformed pictures, meaningless inscriptions, and a wide variation in weight. What was the purpose of such a coinage? Who could use it? According to recent research, the administration of middle Sweden seems comparatively developed in the late Viking Age, especially in its readiness for war and its organization of tax collection (Wijkander 1983). Perhaps the primitive coinage of Sigtuna was meant mainly as payment to soldiers and was never intended for trading.



*11th century, Norway*

Up to the middle of the century the national coinage of Norway was extremely sparse and periodic. It was left to Harald Hardråde, king of Norway from 1047 to 1066, to establish a more permanent coinage. His main issue is called the *triquetra* type. For the first years of Harald's reign the silver content of the *triquetra* penny was of international standard – that is, nearly 90 per cent – but in the 1050s the silver content was drastically reduced. About 1060 it fluctuated at around only 33 per cent. Furthermore, until about 1050 Norwegian coin finds had the same appearance as those in Denmark and Sweden – that is, a mixture of German, English, and Scandinavian coins, most of them pecked and bent. In the reign of Harald this picture changed completely. Foreign coins, hacksilver, and peckmarks disappear and people seem to have accepted the native pennies of base silver, since they were hoarded and used all over the country.

According to written sources Harald payed his soldiers with the bad coinage and they accepted it. In the *Morkinskinna* version of the saga of Harald Hardråde this bad coinage is called the *Haraldslátta*, being 'mostly of copper'. Skaare, who has published an extensive study of the period, states that the only explanation of this remarkable situation must be the existence of very strong royal power (Skaare 1976). In this respect Norway seems to have held a unique position in Scandinavian society during the late Viking Age.

## Conclusion

In endeavouring to find out what coinage tells us about Scandinavian society in the late Viking Age, this brief survey can only touch on some of the main points. Hopefully, I have made it clear that there is an enormous amount of numismatic evidence available to help us, but a systematic process of analysis is only just beginning. Nevertheless, it is already clear that the material is so rich that a great variety of hypotheses about state and society may be tested once we have a uniformly arranged body of detailed publication, allowing statistical treatment of this vast set of data (Malmer 1981).

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# 10 *Interactions between indigenous and western culture in Livonia in the 13th to 16th centuries*

Ē. MUGURĒVIČS

## Introduction

This chapter, based on archaeological material obtained in the territory of the Latvian SSR, deals with interrelations between two essentially different cultural areas – the east Baltic and the Germanic regions.

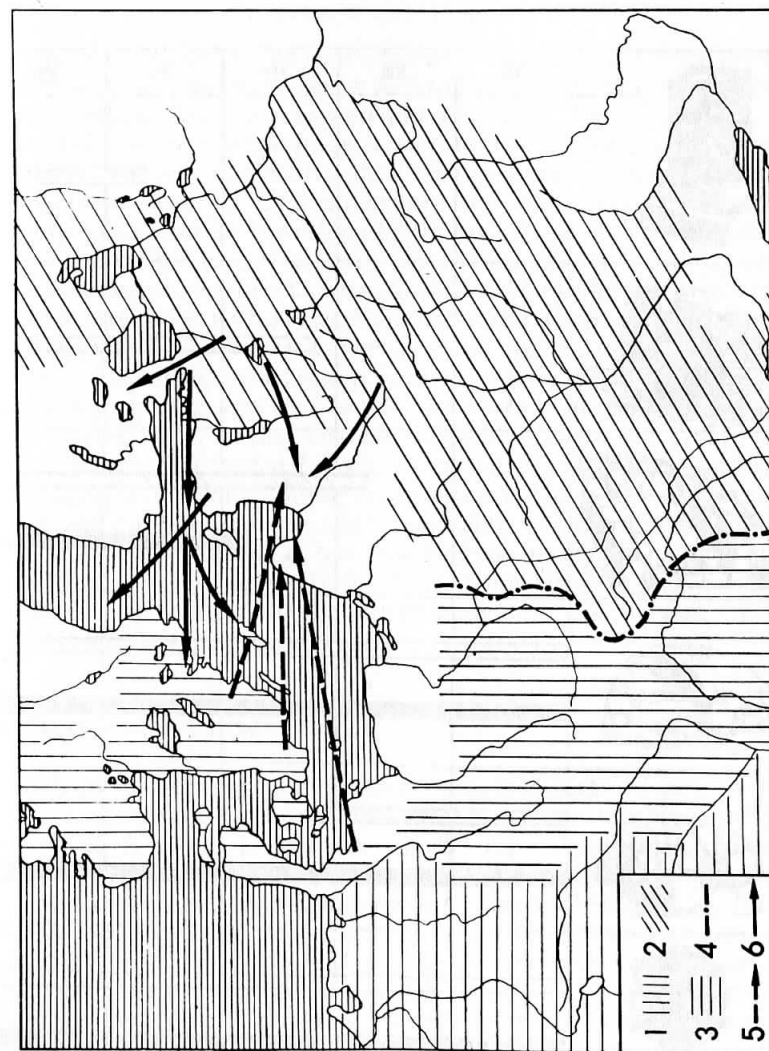
The Teutonic Knights' aggression in the east Baltic (later named Livonia) at the end of the 12th century established the basis for wider cultural contact between German peoples on the one hand and the Balts and the Balto-Finns on the other (Fig. 10.1). The aggression of the German crusaders interrupted the natural process of development in the local culture and caused enormous material damage (destruction of settlements, extermination of the population and its gradual enslavement).

## Architectural indications of cultural conflict

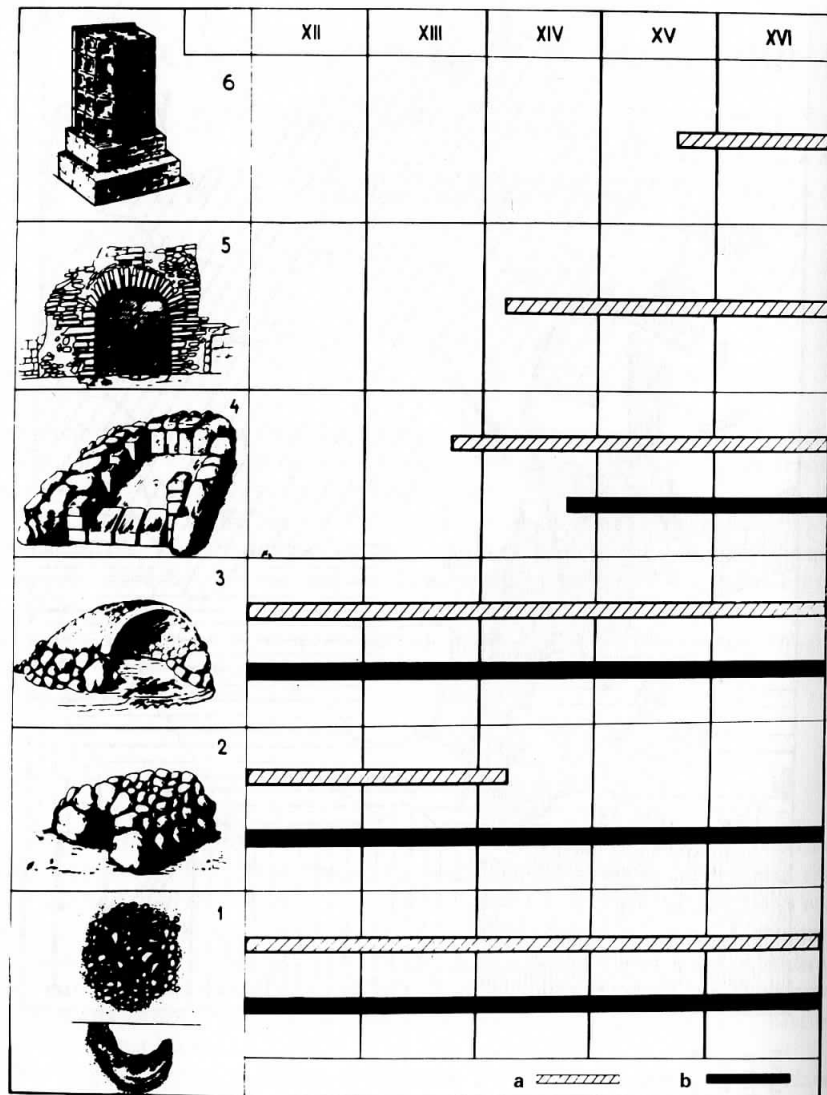
At the time the strangers arrived in Livonia, a new kind of fortification – stone castles – appeared. Until that time, only timber castles were known. From the point of view of archaeological research the appearance of medieval castles is a complex process: along with various borrowings from the west (Germany and Scandinavia), a considerable role was played by the local building traditions (Mugurēvičs 1983a). While the Germans erected mostly stone fortifications in the 13th and the 14th centuries, in some places timber castles were also being built.

The architecture of medieval settlements is represented mostly by surface dwellings of both horizontal log and palisade construction. Horizontal log buildings were dominant in the Baltic up to the 13th century. The buildings are not large (e.g. 4.4 × 4.6 m; 4.9 × 5 m etc.) and they are similar to those used in the forest zone of eastern Europe between the 9th and the 14th centuries, but they differ from contemporary dwellings in western Europe (Sedov 1975, Donat 1980, p. 37).

By contrast, in Riga at the beginning of the 13th century, under the influence of the German colonizers, timber-framed houses were erected (Caune 1984, pp. 83–114). Later, from the 15th to the 17th centuries



**Figure 10.1** The spread of Christianity in the northern part of Europe: 1 Roman Catholicism, 2 Greek Orthodoxy, 3 9th–11th centuries, 4 9th century, 5 up to 9th century, 6 12th–13th centuries.



**Figure 10.2** The development of heating systems in Latvia during the Middle Ages, a – in castles, b – in rural settlements: 1 hearth, 2 stone stove, 3 clay stove, 4 clay stove with brick lining, 5 stove heated with warm air, 6 tile stove.

onwards, the number of stone buildings in castles and towns increased, although in rural settlements timber structures persisted, except in places such as Indrica, where manor houses were put up (Zariņa 1986).

With reference to internal features after the 13th century, stone stoves and clay stoves of types known from the previous period are encountered (Fig. 10.2). Excavations of medieval settlements, such as the castle of Lokstene, the suburb of Sabile, and the township of Dünaburg, have shown that such types of stove also existed later (14th–16th centuries). In the later 13th century, in the Latvian townships where Germans had stayed for some time (e.g. Tervete, Mezotne), clay stoves with a brick lining inside the arc appear. Such stoves are more frequent in stone castles built between the 14th and the 17th centuries. In addition, an essentially new heating system of stoves that warmed the living quarters with hot air appeared in the 14th century in some German stone castles – for example, Altene, Koknese, and others (Graudonis 1983) – and in the 15th century also appeared in the manor houses at Ikskile and Indrica.

Investigation of medieval house construction in Latvia shows that between the 13th and the 15th centuries a more substantial change occurred in castles, towns, manor houses, and at centres where an immigrant population had settled (Mugurēvič 1983, pp. 27–9). At the same time, in rural settlements and castles inhabited by the local population, the old building traditions continued with only a few innovations.

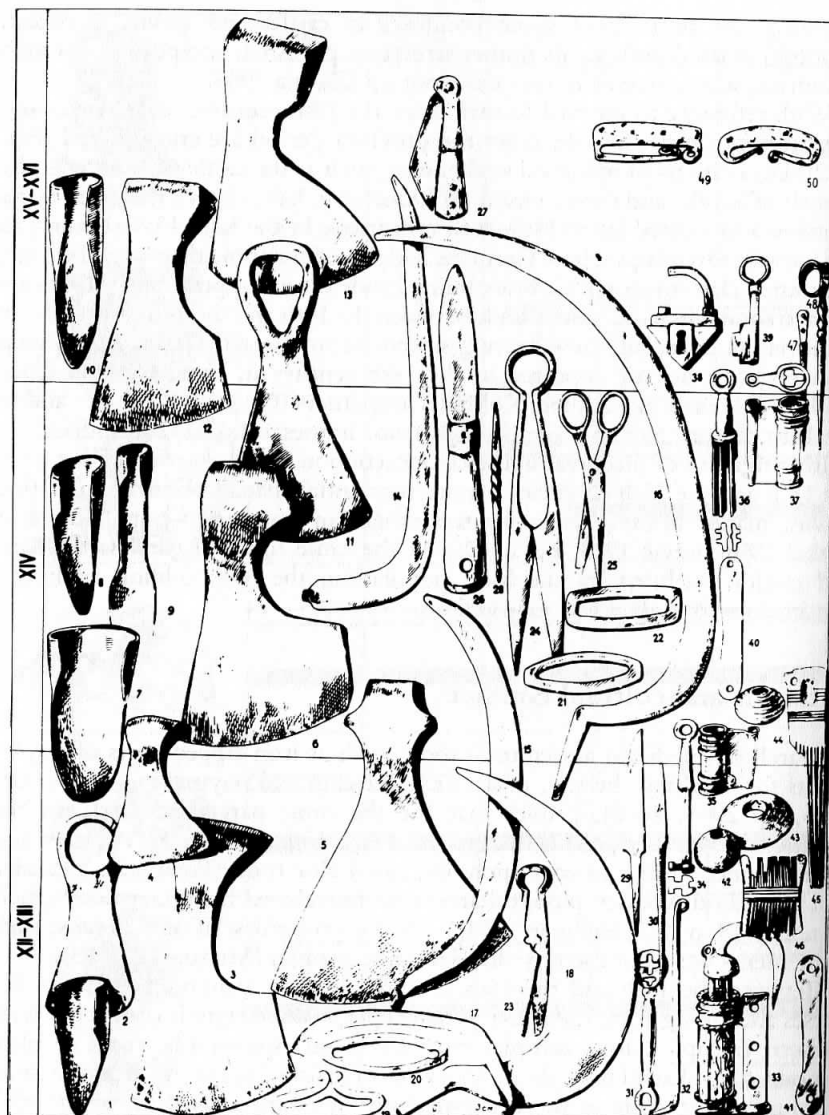
### Artefacts and cultural conflict

Research on medieval agricultural tools, such as iron-tipped parts of implements for working the soil, tools for harvesting and haymaking, etc. (Atlas 1985, pp. 20–5, 66–8), proves that for the most part they carry on the traditions of the local, east Baltic culture of the 10th to the 12th centuries, and are in essence similar to corresponding east Baltic tools (Fig. 10.3). The idea that iron-shod wooden ploughshares were introduced from Germany (Bielenstein 1918, p. 472, Hellman 1954, p. 241) is groundless, if only because such implements were not used by the Germanic peoples (Mugurēvič 1985).

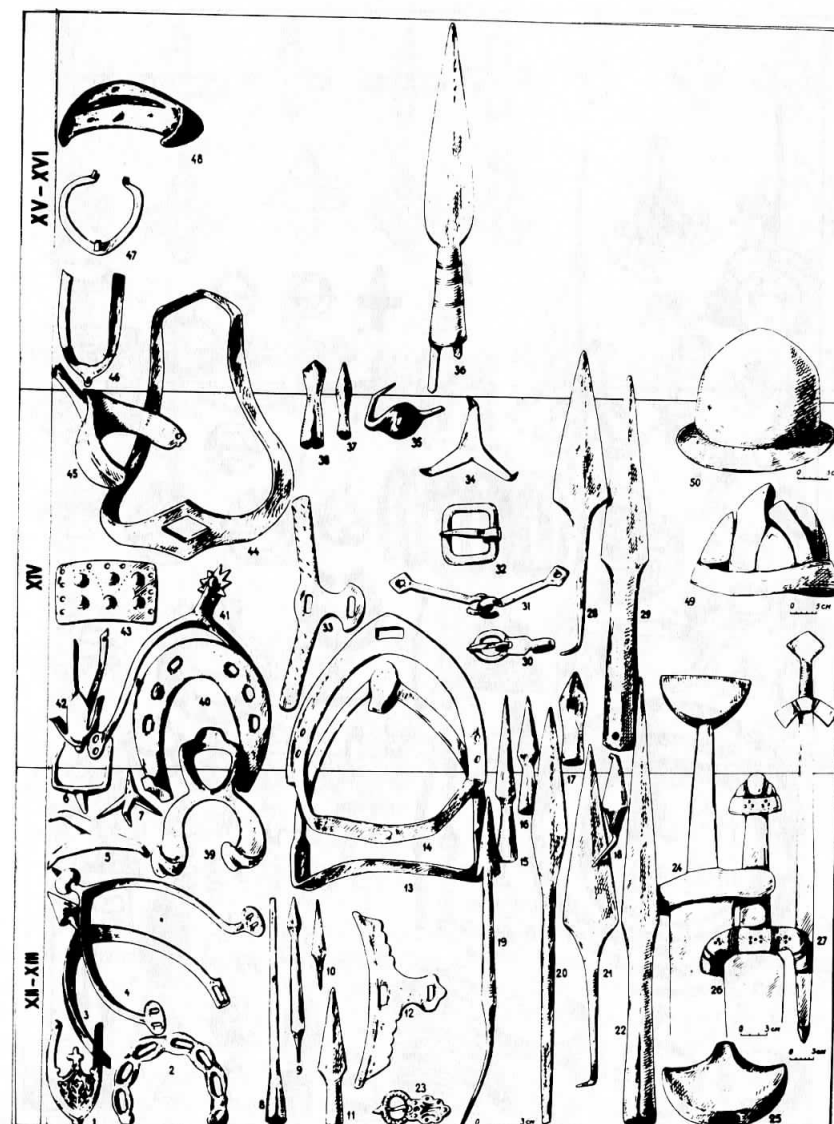
Between the 13th and the 16th centuries among armoured harnesses for horses and riding equipment are certain types whose origin is connected with western Europe – for example, crossbow bolts, spearheads, coats of plate armour, oval-shaped horseshoes, spurs, massive stirrups, etc. At the same time, armour characteristic of the east Baltic peoples during the 12th to the 15th centuries – for example, axes, arrow heads, spearheads, horse-stings, spurs and stirrups for lightly equipped riders (Fig. 10.4) – was still in everyday use.

The variety of forms of east Baltic ornaments in the 10th to the 12th centuries decreased after the 13th century and also deteriorated in quality (Fig. 10.5). The most prevalent ornaments are various pendant amulets, which, according to the belief of their wearers, were a protection against evil spirits. Many pendants may be regarded as symbols of celestial bodies and forces of nature – for example, round, wheel-like crescents and Thor's hammers.





**Figure 10.3** Typical working tools and household utensils in Latvia from the 12th to the 16th centuries.



**Figure 10.4** Typical armour and riding equipment in medieval Latvia.

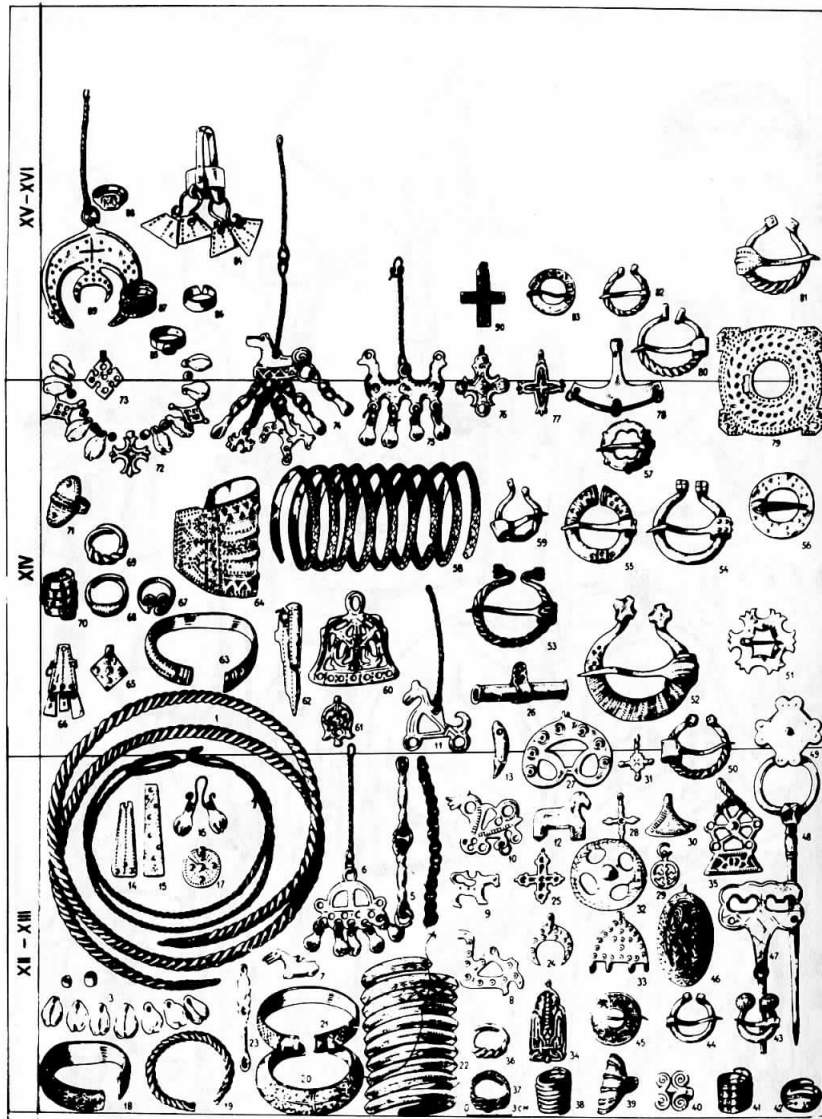


Figure 10.5 Characteristic ornaments and cult artefacts in Latvia in the 12th to the 16th centuries.

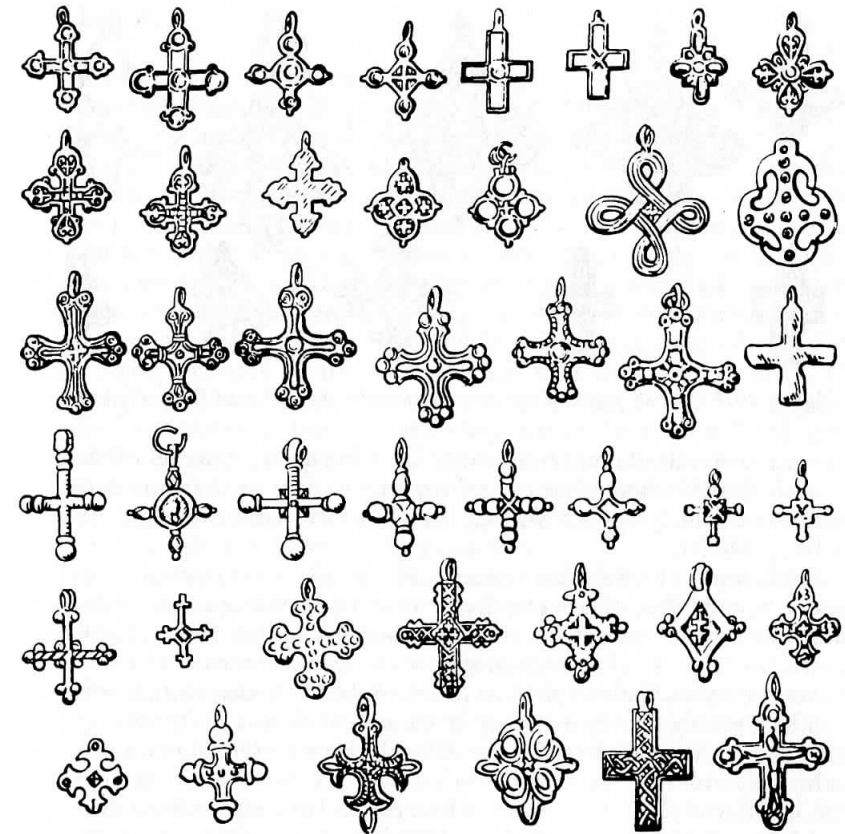


Figure 10.6 Small pendant crosses, connected with Greek Orthodoxy.

Accompanying the spread of Christianity, the archaeological material reveals small Orthodox (11th–14th centuries) and Catholic (12th–15th centuries) crosses (Figs. 10.6 & 7), which were at first introduced from abroad. Most of the small crosses (Mugurēvičs 1974) from the 13th to the 15th centuries are of indigenous make and their prevalence among women's ornaments, including other pendants, shows that their wearers regarded them as objects of adornment or as amulets; this was also partly the case with the eastern Slavs (Darkevič 1960) and Germans (Paulsen 1956).

### Cult and cultural conflict

Churches and monasteries in the lower reaches of the Daugava (e.g. Ikskile, Martinsala, Riga, and Dünaminde) were the first centres of Roman Catholicism in Latvia. The architecture of the first parish churches, situated next to

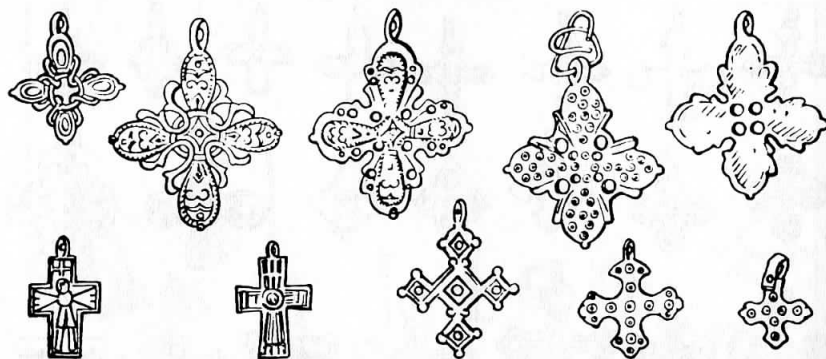


Figure 10.7 Small pendant crosses, connected with Roman Latin Catholicism.

the castles, reveals the traditions of the west European churches of the 7th to the 13th centuries, and in their outer appearance they recall the small churches (*Saalkirche*) widely spread throughout the Holy Roman Empire (Binding 1970, pp. 68–70).

The actions of the German crusaders proved that their main aim was by no means the spreading of Christianity as such. They destroyed not only ancient administrative centres but also Greek Orthodox churches such as Jersika (*Hen. Chron. Liv.*, XIII, 4). However, in spite of the spread of terror, and the forceful conversion to the Catholic faith, symbols of the Orthodox church, which had been brought to Latvian territory from ancient Russia before the spread of Catholicism (Mugurēvičs 1974, pp. 229–30), were preserved in Livonia as late as the 14th and the 15th centuries in the form of small crosses and crucifixes. This is confirmed in written sources too, particularly a letter from the Pope to the Master of the Livonian Order in 1314, drawing attention to the bad work of the German priests which had led to 'pagan blunders' and 'observing the Orthodox faith' (*Liv. Est. Kur. Urk.*, 661).

The bulk of the local population, in fact, especially in the rural areas, preserved pagan traditions for many centuries, and this is attested by the hill-top sanctuaries, sacred trees, and stone places of sacrifice. In agreement with the archaeological findings are the data of *Cosmography* by Sebastian Münster, relating to the middle of the 16th century, which record that the local population of Livonia worshipped the Sun and the Moon, as well as some trees and stones, and offered sacrifices to them (Spekke 1935, pp. 236–8). This attraction to the deities of their ancestors served as one form of ideological struggle against the foreign oppressors.

## Conclusion

In the Middle Ages, then, in the territory of Latvia, two opposite cultures can be traced: that of the east Baltic peoples and that of the Germans. The former, as witnessed by archaeological data, perpetuated the traditions of the preceding period under the most unfavourable conditions, and was maintained by the peasants, who represented the overwhelming majority of the population in Latvia. The latter was represented by a small minority – German feudal lords and the clergy and town-dwellers inhabiting the castles, manor houses, and towns. The two cultures were separated by deep class and national differences. Due to the enormous vitality and force of its resistance, Latvian culture was able to preserve its individuality throughout the whole of the Middle Ages, although its development was held back for centuries. The people continued to observe the ancient rituals with regard to cremation cemeteries, orientation of burials, and the deposition of grave goods (Mugurēvičs 1983b). Indeed, a deep respect for ancestors' beliefs helped to preserve Latvian nationality and independent culture throughout the Middle Ages. As in Russia and other adjacent territories, paganism in this area remained the main form of world outlook for the peasantry.

Ethnic processes during the Middle Ages in Latvia followed two courses: in the rural areas there was consolidation of the Latvian people from among various east Baltic nationalities, and then there was the subjection of the local population of the castles and towns to Germanization.

Despite the assertions of Balto-German and Western historiography underlining the role of the Germanic mission in the development of Latvian culture (Transehe-Roseneck 1924–6, Hubatsch 1971), between the 13th and the 16th centuries Latvian culture was founded for the most part on the cultural heritage of the local people. Analysis of the monuments of the Middle Ages shows that in the 13th and the 14th centuries the standard of material culture among the rural population was different from that of the castle dwellers. The material introduced from the west related mainly to the inhabitants of towns and castles, among whom foreigners were in the majority. So, there are no grounds for speaking of a cultural mission on the part of the German crusaders affecting the local population because for the most part the local population remained and was unaffected by developments elsewhere.

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## POPULATION

# 11 *Height variation in the light of social and regional differences in medieval Denmark*

JESPER L. BOLDSSEN

## **Introduction**

Many populations throughout the world have experienced a dramatic increase in the average height of at least the males within the last 150 years. In Denmark average male height has increased from 1.66 m in 1852–6 (Boldsen & Kronborg 1985) to 1.80 m in the 1980s (*Statistisk årbog* 1985). Except for the Mesolithic and the early and middle Neolithic, Denmark has never been reported to have a population as short as the 1.66 m derived from skeletal measurements (Bröste & Jørgensen 1956, Bennike 1985).

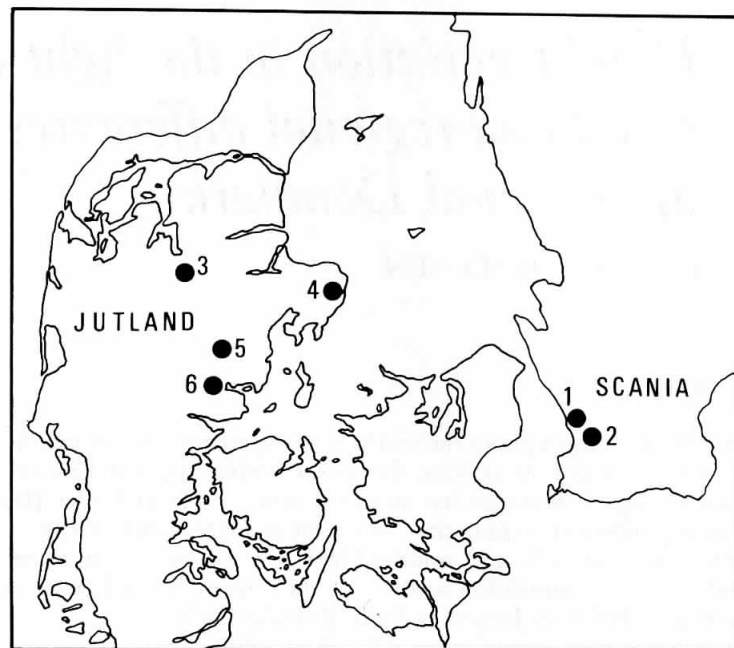
Traditionally, the reconstruction of heights from skeletal measurements has been carried out using the formulae given by Trotter & Gleser (1952, 1958). However, an analysis of the regression of height upon lengths of long bones in a Danish medieval skeletal sample has shown that the Trotter & Gleser formulae consistently overestimated the living height by 2–3 cm (Boldsen 1984a). Further, Kieffer-Olsen *et al.* (1986) have recently reported that these formulae overestimate the height in a sample of rural Danish medieval skeletons by as much as 5–6 cm.

As the reasons for these large discrepancies are not understood it is unsafe to base the analysis of height differences in medieval Denmark on predicted heights. Presently there are two possible ways of comparing the heights of the original living populations with the skeletal samples. Either heights measured by the method described by Boldsen (1984a) can be compared or one has to rely on comparisons of untransformed measurements of lengths of long bones.

This chapter reconstructs the patterns of height variation in medieval Denmark by analysing the length of the thighbone or femur.

## **Background**

Compared with present-day Denmark medieval Denmark was a relatively large country in northern Europe, consisting also of Skåne, Halland, and Blekinge, which are now part of Sweden, and of south Slesvig, which is now in the Federal Republic of Germany. The Middle Ages in Denmark is



**Figure 11.1** A map of medieval Denmark indicating the main provinces. The numbers indicate the location of sites that yielded data for this chapter. 1 Löddeköpinge, 2 S:t Stefan, 3 Lille Sct. Mikkelsgade, 4 Grenå Gamle Kirke, 5 Øm Kloster, 6 Bygholm.

considered to be the period from AD 1050 to 1536 – that is, from the end of the Viking Age to the Protestant Reformation.

Denmark is an area of lowland divided into many islands by arms of the sea. For internal communications, therefore, both sea transport and road connections were of importance. Nevertheless, the country is more or less divided into two halves by Store Bælt, between the main islands of Zealand and Funen. This division tends to be stressed in geographical analyses, but differences within the halves are not considered here.

Data have been extracted from the sites shown in Figure 11.1.

#### *Löddeköpinge*

This is a rural site in Scania. The cemetery was in use from the first half of the 11th century to almost the mid-12th. The stratigraphy of the site is well documented and burial custom has yielded information on the social stratification in the population of Löddeköpinge in the early Middle Ages. The remains of 1412 persons have been excavated here (Cinthio 1982, Boldsen 1984b, Persson & Persson 1983).

#### *S:t Stefan*

This is an urban site in Lund, Scania. The cemetery was in use throughout the Middle Ages and a little after. Remains of more than 3000 persons were excavated, but only 75 skeletons measured by the author are included in the present analyses (Mårtensson 1980).

#### *Lille Sct. Mikkelsgade*

This is an urban site in Viborg, Jutland. The cemetery was in use from the 11th century until at least 1529, when the church was demolished. Remains of nearly 500 persons were excavated (Boldsen 1979).

#### *Grenå Gamle Kirke*

This is a rural site in Grenå, Jutland. Presently Grenå is a town, but the excavated burials in this cemetery probably predate the urban development in Grenå in the 13th century. Nearly 100 skeletons have been excavated. This site has not been published, but Bennike (1985) has given a short description.

#### *Øm Kloster*

This is a rural monastery in Jutland which has some secular burials. The monastery was established in 1172 and was demolished in 1560. Around 800 skeletons have been excavated (Isager 1941, Boldsen 1983).

#### *Bygholm*

This is a rural site in Jutland. The dating of the site is still somewhat uncertain, but it appears that it was in use for 200 years or more, ending in the 14th century. Evidence of more than 600 burials was found during the excavations. This is the first medieval cemetery from southern Scandinavia which has been totally excavated (Kieffer-Olsen *et al.* 1986).

## Results

Table 11.1 summarizes the descriptive statistics for the distribution of lengths of femur grouped by sex, region of origin (Jutland or Scania), and social structure (rural or urban).

Table 11.2 gives the estimates of the main effects of regional, structural, and social differences on the length of the femur in the two sexes. These effects can be translated into height differences by multiplying the slope of the regression of height by length of the femur (0.2322). Thus the population of Jutland appears some 2.7 cm taller than the population of Scania, the urban population is 3.1 cm taller than the population of Scania, the urban population is 3.1 cm taller than the rural population from the same region, and the better-off people in the Löddeköpinge cemetery are 3 cm taller than the poorer people (Cinthio & Boldsen 1984).

Among the females the estimate for the regional effect is based only on the rural data, and the estimate of the effect of social structure is based only on the



**Table 11.1** The average length of the femur among males and females from urban and rural communities in Scania and Jutland.

|                | Scania | Jutland |       |
|----------------|--------|---------|-------|
| <i>males</i>   |        |         |       |
| n              | 45     | 52      | urban |
| x              | 469.5  | 475.7   |       |
| var            | 688    | 616     |       |
| n              | 158    | 165     | rural |
| x              | 451.6  | 463.8   |       |
| var            | 687    | 538     |       |
| <i>females</i> |        |         |       |
| n              | 30     | 36      | urban |
| x              | 425.1  | 425.1   |       |
| var            | 431    | 469     |       |
| n              | 125    | 86      | rural |
| x              | 415.0  | 429.8   |       |
| var            | 348    | 388     |       |

n = number of individuals

x = average length of femur (mm)

**Table 11.2** The average difference between lengths (mm) of the femur from Jutland and Scania (regional), between urban and rural populations (structural), and between the upper and lower social groups in the Löddeköpinge cemetery (social) by sex.

|            | males |      | females |      | both sexes |      |
|------------|-------|------|---------|------|------------|------|
|            | d     | s.e. | d       | s.e. | d          | s.e. |
| regional   | 9.2   | 2.43 | 14.8    | 2.61 | 11.8       | 1.78 |
| structural | 14.9  | 2.88 | 11.1    | 3.87 | 13.5       | 2.92 |
| social     | 15.9  | 4.93 | 9.5     | 5.08 | 12.8       | 3.54 |

d = difference

s.e. = standard error

Note. The sex differences are not statistically significant.

Scania data, because the length of the femur appears to be abnormally short among the females from Lille Sct. Mikkelsgade compared to the males from the same site (Table 11.3). This probably reflects the fact that there was an immense immigration of subadult and young adult females into medieval Viborg from surrounding rural areas (Baldsen 1984b).

**Table 11.3** Measures of sexual dimorphism in different skeletal samples.

| Population             | Average female to average male femur length |            |
|------------------------|---------------------------------------------|------------|
|                        | Ratio                                       | Difference |
| Lille Sct. Mikkelsgade | 89.36                                       | 50.6       |
| Löddeköpinge           | 91.87                                       | 36.7       |
| S:t Stefan             | 91.52                                       | 39.4       |
| Rural Jutland          | 92.67                                       | 34.0       |
| Late Neolithic         | 91.73                                       | 39.6       |
| Middle Neolithic       | 92.00                                       | 34.9       |

Note. The two Neolithic samples are from Denmark (Bröste & Jørgensen 1956). The ratio is 100 times the female average divided by the male average and the difference is the male average minus the female average. The Lille Sct. Mikkelsgade sample stands out by being by far the most sexually dimorphic of the six samples.

## Discussion

Of all periods of Danish history and prehistory only the Middle Ages have yielded large series of skeletons from populations which are socially and culturally undifferentiated. So in a way this period provides the earliest chance for studying the relationship between social and geographical population structure, and the height of the general population.

From 1849 every young Danish male had to undergo a medical examination in order to determine whether he was fit for conscription into the armed forces. Measuring height was one of the elements of this examination, so from that time on we have the first reliable written source for the height of the general Danish population.

It is worth noting that the greater average height in the western half of the country in the Middle Ages (as documented above) was still evident in the 1850s (Baldsen & Kronborg 1984). This may indicate a long-lasting stability within the population of Denmark.

From the Middle Ages to well into the 20th century the vast majority of the Danish population were rural peasants, thus the heights reported in the 1850s are those of a mainly rural population. In this connection it is worth noting that the average, measured male height in the Bygholm sample (Kieffer-Olsen *et al.* 1986) is 166 cm, exactly the same as the average of the conscription heights from the 1850s for the county in which Bygholm is situated.

The Bygholm sample is the first large medieval rural skeletal sample in which the heights have been measured reliably while still in the graves. It is also the first fairly recent sample which shows an average height similar to those measured in the 1850s.

The Lille Sct. Mikkelsgade material was the first medieval Danish sample ever to be measured while still in the grave (Baldsen 1984a). It is of particular interest that bodily proportions differ so much within the same main province

during the Middle Ages. These differences in the regression of height on the length of the femur indicate that the difference between the height of rural and urban medieval Danish populations was far larger than the 3.1 cm which can be predicted from multiplying the difference in average length of the femur by the slope of the regression of height on this length. The height difference between the peasants and the townspeople might in reality be as large as 8 cm.

The shortness of the rural population as compared to the urban is probably a reflection of differences in population structure between the two types of communities (Boldsen 1983, 1984b). The geographic mobility of the peasantry was very limited: if they did not go to live in the towns and cities, they hardly moved at all. This may have led to inbreeding in the small and genetically semi-isolated rural communities. Since inbreeding leads to a lowering of the average level of heterozygosity in a population, this may provide the biological reason for the relative shortness of the rural population.

This sort of inbreeding would not have taken place among the urban population. Historically, urban populations have not reproduced in this way, since the population is maintained by a constant immigration to the towns from rural areas. In the Middle Ages the mortality of the urban population, at least of Viborg, was very high, especially among females (Boldsen 1984b). Yet Danish towns did not disappear during the Middle Ages; in fact, they grew. The maintenance and growth of the towns in the Middle Ages required immigration from large rural areas, not solely from one single peasant community.

The mixing of people from different genetically semi-isolated communities prevented inbreeding in the towns and it may even have led to heterosis – that is, greater height due to increased average level of heterozygosity – among native townspeople.

The difference between the averages of measured heights from Lille Sct. Mikkelsgade and Bygholm, both in Jutland, is nearly 7 cm. This is probably due to differences in the structure of the populations buried at the two sites. If so, this means that around 50 per cent of the height increase during the last 130 years could be due to the breaking-down of the inbreeding, genetically semi-isolated, small rural communities and the establishment of one large, and substantially undivided, gene pool in Denmark.

Though it is not possible to identify it definitively, there is evidence for the same type of social inequality of height in the Bygholm cemetery as has been demonstrated at Löddeköpinge. From work I am currently undertaking, it would seem that the regression of the measured height on the length of the femur in the Bygholm sample does not appear to contain a discontinuity, which would allow us to say that the socially better-off segment of the population was more than about 3 cm taller than the poorer people.

This means that height differentiation in medieval Denmark can be correlated with differences in social and breeding structures of the population, rather than with differences in wealth.

The height differences found in the main provinces of medieval Denmark must be an indication of systematic differences in gene frequencies in the

different parts of the country. Information on the existence of such gene-frequency clines can also be gleaned from the study of cranial morphology. The ordinary population of Jutland appears to have larger brain cases than does the population of Scania, and the foramen occipitale magnum has a more forward position among Jutlanders.

## Conclusion

Information on the height of an ancient population can be used to reconstruct certain key factors in the social and biological structures of the population. However, the traditional theory that height differences are mainly due to differences in wealth and living conditions is not supported. Height differences within one region are more determined by differences in population structure than by anything else.

## Acknowledgements

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## 12 Merovingian skull deformations in the southwest of France

ERIC CRUBÉZY

### Introduction

One important factor in the relationships between peoples and ethnic groups throughout the early Middle Ages is the phenomenon of artificial skull deformation due to the wearing of headbands and/or small slats during the very first months of life as the skull was developing. For the early Middle Ages the distribution area of deformed skulls stretches traditionally from the Transcaucasus to Germany and Lake Geneva and, in France, seems to have been confined to the departments of Côte d'Or and Ain (Simon 1979). No deformed skulls have been found further west than the five discovered in southwest France. These discoveries are thought to complete the distribution of this custom in the Middle Ages, and together with the present research on the peoples of that region (Crubézy 1985, 1986), they afford the opportunity to document its genesis and its later developments (Fig. 12.1).

### Discoveries and archaeological contexts

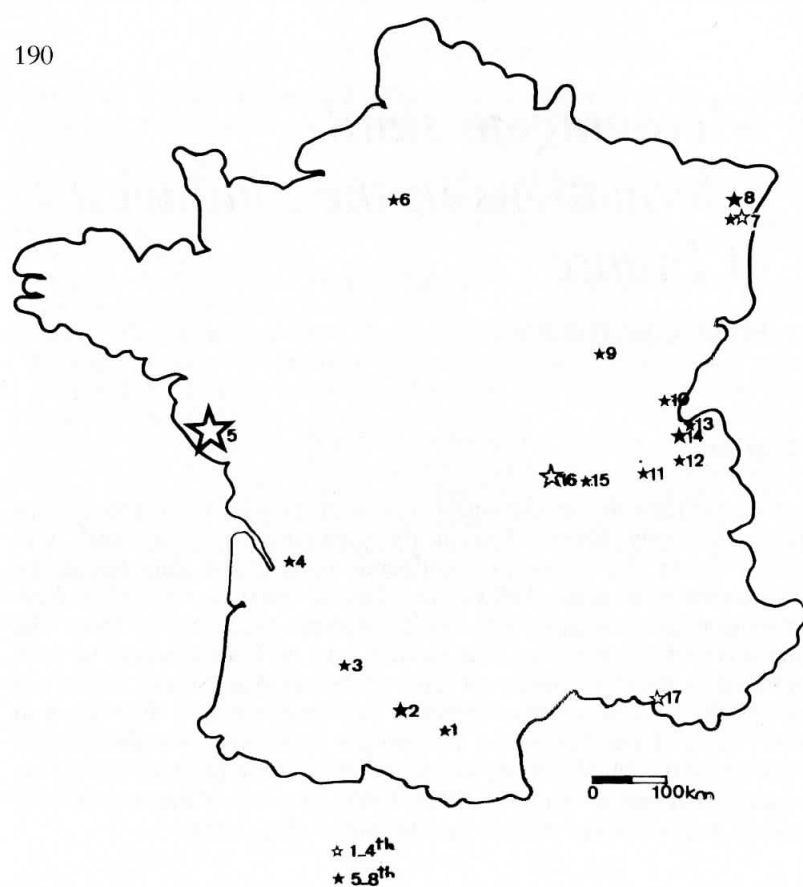
Two front-to-back oblique skull deformations were found in the Rivel cemetery at Vénerque in Haute Garonne (Vidal excavation). This cemetery dates from the second half of the 6th century to the second half of the 7th. The most important deformation (grave 30) is on a woman's skeleton (Fig. 12.2 top); the other (grave 15) is less marked and occurs on a man's skeleton. The first 44 tombs unearthed in this cemetery were the subject of an exhaustive archaeological and anthropological study (Crubézy 1986).

The cemetery in Lectoure in Gers (Larrieu excavation), which dates from the 6th to the 8th centuries, contained one contextless example with the most significant skull deformation to date in southwest France.

A sarcophagus discovered at Routier in Aude and dating from the end of the 6th or beginning of the 7th century, yielded a woman's skeleton for which Duday (1983) suspected a deformation without being able to confirm it, due to the lack of posterior compression (Fig. 12.2 bottom).

The cemetery at Coutras in Gironde (Dany-Barrau excavations) yielded a skull deformation dating possibly from the 7th century but more likely to be



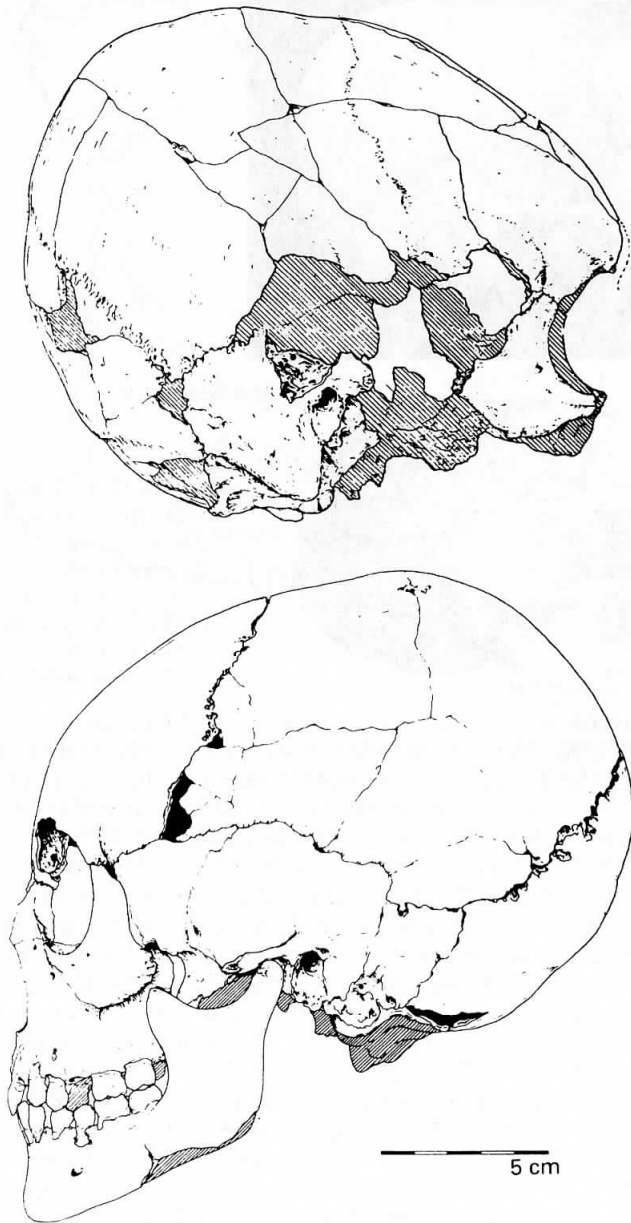


**Figure 12.1** Distribution of cranial deformations from the 1st to the 8th centuries in France (the size of the star is proportional to the number of deformations per site): 1 Routier, 2 Rivel, 3 Lectoure, 4 Coutras, 5 St Hilaire de Riez, 6 Maule, 7 Strasbourg (2 sites), 8 Dachstein, 9 Noiron sous Gevrey, 10 Voiteur, 11 Briord, 12 Annecy, 13 Gaillard, 14 Villy, 15 Meyzieux, 16 St-Genest, 17 Marseilles.

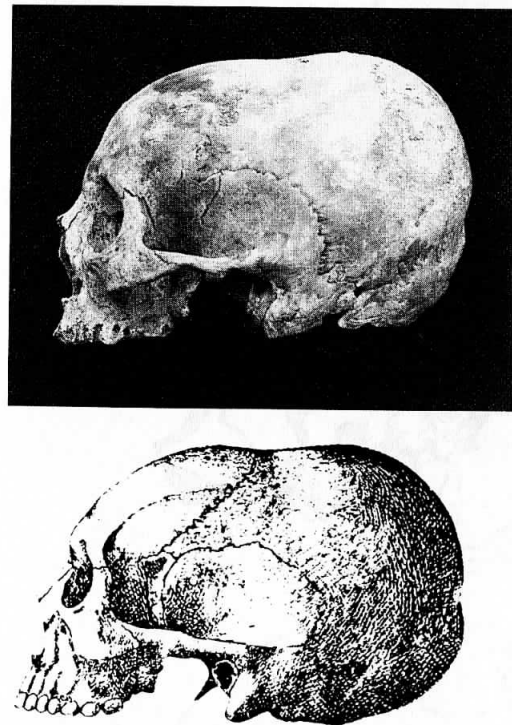
from the 8th. This deformation seems to be the latest of the series and is the only one of the circular, not the oblique fronto-occipital type (Fig. 12.3).

The customs of the peoples living in Aquitaine during the early Middle Ages and the later Empire are not known, since cremation had been the regional tradition as far back as the end of the Bronze Age and thus there are only a few skeletons that can be studied from these periods. However, Baudouin noticed in 1911, at St-Hilaire de Riez in Vendée, very close to Aquitaine, the discovery of nine examples, which are dated by Dechelette to the 3rd century. All show, in various degrees, a circular skull deformation.

The later series has not yet been the subject of many studies, but a circular-type deformation is known at Monségur near Libourne in Gironde



**Figure 12.2** Lateral view of skull from Vénéreque, grave 30 (top); Lateral view of skull from Routier (bottom) (after Duday 1983).

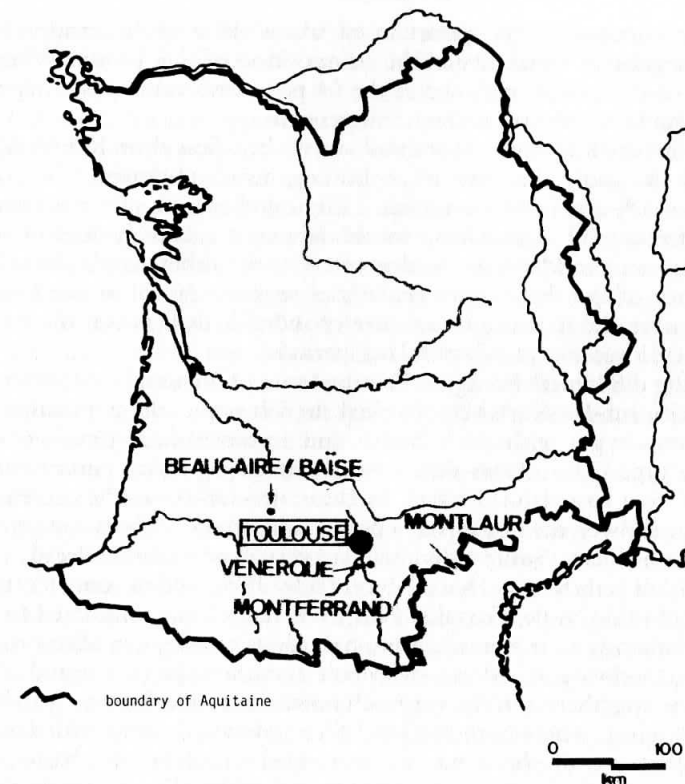


**Figure 12.3** Lateral view of skull from Coutras, 7th–8th century (top); 'Toulousian' deformed skull of 19th-century date (bottom, after Ambialet 1893). Note the similarity of form, a result of comparable methods of deformation.

(Court excavations) and dates from the 9th to the 12th centuries. According to Delisle (1880), the excavations which took place in the 15th–17th-century cemeteries of the Toulouse region yielded many of these types of deformation, and further evidence of this practice has been excavated in St-Pierre des Cuisines (Cazes-Tremolet excavation) in Toulouse.

From the 18th-century evidence it would appear, according to the work of Delisle and Ambialet (1893), that in some villages in the southwest (mainly in Haute-Garonne, in Ariège, in a part of Aude, and in Gers), that between 50 and 100 per cent of the population were deformed in this way. This custom was progressively abandoned at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries, but we saw one example in 1986 on a woman born in Clermont l'Hérault, in 1914. This woman, who had been brought up by her grandmother, showed a skull deformation of the annular type.

One problem is to identify the origin of the practice of skull deformation. If a possible source is believed to be some external ethnic population, this could well be the Visigoths, who settled in 418 in this region. The Goths had been in contact very early on with peoples who practised this custom, especially during their migration – to the shores of the Black Sea in 257–8. Some deformed skulls have been attributed to them: those from Feszthely-Fenckpuskza, Hungary (nine original specimens; Kiszely 1978), those from



**Figure 12.4** Map of southwest France showing sites where anthropological studies have taken place.

Vienna, Austria (Beninger 1934, Kiszely 1978), two from the Kvanj cemetery, Yugoslavia (Kiszely 1970), those from Padua (Bellasi 1962) and Florence, Italy (Kiszely 1970). It must not be forgotten that during those troubled times both groups and individuals used to move around freely, and that the labels of Goth, Visigoth, Frank, etc. do not correspond at all to an anthropological entity, but only to the type of grave goods found in these or neighbouring tombs.

The population of the southwest in the early Middle Ages has been studied using data from four cemeteries: Vénérque, Monferrand, Beaucaire-sur-Baïse, and Montlaur (Crubézy 1986) (Fig. 12.4). Two types of analysis have been carried out on the cranial osteometrical data: principal-components analysis and variability studies. This program, starting from two groups (men and women from the same cemetery), looks for individuals at the  $D^2$  (Mahalanobis distance) from the mean of their group. Every individual placed at more than two standard deviations from the mean can be considered 'alien' to its group; the number of individuals between one and two standard deviations

can also be compared. The presence of 'aliens' in a given group clearly indicates the relative variability in the composition of that group. When the percentage of individuals included at the 64 per cent level forms a majority, the group can be considered to be homogeneous.

Despite the small number of individuals studied (less than 100 for all the cemeteries), it seems that the most homogeneous population is that of Montlaur, which is post-Merovingian. This, together with other osteometrical and osteoscopy arguments, would favour a relatively high level of intermarriage in the Montlaur settlement. On the other hand, the relative heterogeneity of the three other cemeteries suggests (as far as we know at present) a more significant intermixture of individuals between the 6th and the 7th centuries as compared with later periods.

In fact, the differences between the cemeteries of Vénéreque, Montferrand, and Beaucaire-sur-Baïse are very marked. In Vénéreque, the population is of Mediterranean type, with poor health and impoverished grave goods of Aquitanian type. This shows that it was part of a peasant community or subordinate to a large landed estate. In Beaucaire-sur-Baïse, the cemetery of La Turraque showed the remains of a population whose analysis demonstrates marked heterogeneity. Some individuals are very close to a type already found in the St-Galais cemetery in Deux-Sèvres (Billy 1970) and in some Visigothic cemeteries of Old Castile (Garralda 1981), where they are considered to be of external ethnic origin. It is much more hazardous to assign an alien origin to many other individuals. Many of Mediterranean type are found. These observations, together with the very rich northern Frankish grave goods, and the 122 sarcophagi where both local and alien individuals were buried, favour the view that use of the cemetery was determined on the basis of the socioeconomic level of individuals and of their families. There is no doubt that we have here a privileged burial ground where rich natives lie alongside a new Frankish upper class.

In Montferrand the population is relatively homogeneous but a variability study reveals one 'alien' individual, who had already been noticed by Audy & Riquet (1961) and Charles (1964-5). This individual has different characteristics from the rest and could have Mongoloid affinities (Audy & Riquet 1961). This cemetery stands out from all the others in the areas, according to the variability analyses, and the principal individuals make up a different group, which has relative homogeneity and in which can be found elements alien to western Europe. The significance of such a cemetery is still obscure. However, there is no apparent evidence to support the hypothesis that it is a cemetery of invaders, although the geographical situation of Montferrand (at the edge of Aude and Haute-Garonne, on the main route from the Atlantic to the Mediterranean) could argue in favour of a military station in the area. This last hypothesis could explain the relative homogeneity of individuals and the presence of foreigners. Such arguments have been used in the past in the case of other military stations (Billy 1976) in other times and other places.

It seems that no cemeteries containing alien elements have yielded skull deformations. On the other hand, there is no reason to believe that the two

deformed individuals at Vénéreque are not native to the region, as are those at Routier and at Coutras. As far as the skull at Lectoure is concerned, only a study of the cemetery will yield the necessary information.

At this stage, it seems opportune to comment on the origin of the custom of skull deformation, not only in France but also in Europe as a whole. Since the study of deformed skulls has been thought for a very long time to belong exclusively to the domain of archaeology, some scholars, when confronted with distribution maps, have considered the practice as a cultural marker. They wanted to match the evidence from the ground with historical texts, and were influenced by the writings of Hippocrates, Strabo, Livy, Pliny, and others (Gélis 1984), especially Marcellinus and Apollinarius, who claimed that the Huns knew about this deformation. It is not surprising, therefore, that they associated the main discoveries with this particular ethnic group. In the face of archaeological contexts that were often badly defined, and considering that the appearance of other ethnic groups in central Europe (Ostrogoths, Alans, Sarmatians) corresponded closely with that of the Huns, this theory was easily accepted.

So Zirov (1940) – quoted by Buchet (in preparation) – Wermer (1956), Sauter (1954-5, 1961), Nemeskéri (1976), and Simon (1979) have all studied skull deformation as a cultural marker of the influence of the Huns in Europe. Nemeskéri, following Wermer, differentiated two geographically distinct groups, linked together by connections in time and space. Sauter (1961) used anthropological arguments, such as the relatively high frequency of the interroot extension of dental enamel in the population of St-Prex (Sauter & Moeschler 1960), together with spade-shaped incisors and jutting cheekbones, to support his hypothesis that the influence of the Huns is not merely cultural but also racial. In western Europe this fourfold association – deformed skulls, Mongoloid features, Huns, Burgundians – was evoked whenever there was a new discovery. Thus Gaillard de Semainville *et al.* (1978), working on a deformed specimen in Ain, looked for these Mongoloid features and inferred that he was a Burgundian; this allowed them to redefine the frontier of Sapaudia (Savoy).

Although some anthropologists tried to minimize the Mongoloid problem in western Europe (Debetz, quoted by Audy & Riquet 1961) in the 1960s, in both western and eastern Europe (Audy & Riquet 1961) in cemeteries of the early Middle Ages, several human types – Nordic, Mediterranean, and Mongoloid – were defined, and those individuals which did not fit into any one group were considered to be of mixed descent (Audy & Riquet 1961, Perrot 1973).

The increase or decrease of various types according to place or era was correlated with waves of invasions, which were then matched with historic events. All these theories coincided perfectly with the diffusionist and racial hypotheses fashionable at the time. Later, however, as a result of the discovery that spade-shaped incisors and interroot extension of enamel were nonspecific (Kramar Gerster 1982), together with the facts that the Mongoloid features of the Huns had never been formally proved (Helmuth 1970, Kiszely 1978) and



that there are great, almost insurmountable difficulties in the osteometrical techniques needed to demonstrate Mongoloid features on isolated individuals, doubt was cast on the earlier studies (Kiszely 1978, Crubézy 1986, Buchet in preparation).

Lastly, limitations in Wermer's and Nemeskéri's classifications emerged: geometrical areas were too large and too strictly classified; data and distribution maps were too schematic; there was a desire to match historical events with archaeological ones; artificially deformed skulls prior to the early Middle Ages in western Europe were not taken into account.

In 1978 Kiszely reconsidered all the deformed skulls of Eurasia between 6000 BC and the 7th century AD. In 200 BC the nomadic civilizations living in the area from the Carpathians to the Amour river practised skull deformation, a custom they apparently passed on to the peoples settling, around 230 AD, to the northeast of the Black Sea. The date when Ostrogoths, Alans, and Sarmatians appeared in central Europe corresponds closely to the time of the Huns. This favoured Wermer's hypothesis, supported by texts from Marcellinus and Apollinarius, that the practice of skull deformation in Europe originated in this ethnic group. The Huns, during their long journey from Lake Baikal to the western extremity of Europe, must have met and perhaps absorbed peoples such as the Iranians and the Kenkol group, who had practised the custom for many years. But even this hypothesis is doubtful, because none of the best-known Hun cemeteries have shown, according to Kiszely, any skull deformations at all.

In the early Middle Ages two large concentrations of deformed skulls are known in Europe. One is in central Europe in the Carpathian basin, where the Alans, Sarmatians, and Germanic tribes are said to have taken up the tradition, again as the result of contact with peoples brought in by invasion, and the second is in the area of Vienna and central Czechoslovakia, where the custom seems to be indigenous.

We believe that discoveries dating from the time of the great invasions, and found near these large centres, might eventually be related to the passage or the settlement of Germanic tribes. The diffusion of this custom among the native populations allows us to extend the chronological framework, and is more in tune with our concept of the relationship between peoples and ethnic groups throughout the early Middle Ages. In other regions, where discoveries are more isolated or where, within the same region, examples of deformation are few and far between, the diffusionist hypothesis is more questionable. These theories have attracted all the defects of event-based archaeology (Galay 1986).

By choosing to study the topic of skull deformation, scientists have selected a cultural feature which, whenever it is discovered, is considered to belong to a homogeneous assemblage: a monothetic theory which is representative of a people or a group (Wermer 1956, Nemeskéri 1976), or more generally of peoples brought together by invasion (Kiszely 1978). According to these authors, this cultural feature is diffused from a privileged centre towards the periphery, where it is found less frequently (Gaillard de Semainville *et al.*

1978) or becomes less elaborate as the custom dies (Simon 1979). This is despite the fact that very slightly deformed skulls have been known since the early Middle Ages in the principal centres of deformation (see photos published by Kiszely 1978).

As with any diffusionist theory, these interpretations run up against two major difficulties. First, the different centres of skull deformation could have come into existence independently of each other; the custom is universal and a phenomenon of convergence can be observed. Thus, in Italy, prehistoric skull deformations dating from around 2000 BC are known at Gaudio (unpublished, quoted in Kiszely 1978). In France, Mortillet discovered, at the end of the last century, at Guiry-en-Vexin, four Neolithic skulls showing an oblique fronto-occipital deformation (Lagotata 1921, Menard 1977), and several other Neolithic examples have been observed in Aveyron (Baudouin 1911). At Corveissiat in Ain two deformed skulls were discovered in a tumulus of the Hallstatt period (Chantre 1894, Sauter 1939, Gaillard de Semainville *et al.* 1978). The custom also seems to exist in Gallo-Roman settlements: at Strasbourg there are two deformed skulls from a cemetery of the Roman period (Ulrich 1957, Kiszely 1978). In Marseilles, two other individuals were dated to the 2nd or the 3rd century (Fallot 1881, Chantre 1882). Some skeletons exhumed at St-Genest (Loire) and dating from the Gallo-Roman period certainly showed some deformations (Artigaud 1863), as did nine from St-Hilaire de Riez (Vendée), dating from the 3rd century (Baudouin 1911), although the evidence in these two cases is less reliable.

Second, our ideas on the great migrations have changed over time, and it is now thought that individuals coming from Asia only rarely reached Europe directly. It seems inappropriate nowadays to consider, in a systematic way, the deformed specimens found in the Rhone group or in Germany as belonging to foreign warriors or prisoners. As a matter of fact, whereas nearly all examples found in Sapaudia are considered, by French authors (Gaillard de Semainville *et al.* 1978), to have been born in Germany, those found in the latter country are considered by German authors to have been foreigners (von Pfeffer 1972-3).

The example of the Franks and the Alemanni is quite significant: many authors are of the opinion that these peoples did not deform skulls, or at least only exceptionally (von Pfeffer 1972-3, Gaillard de Semainville *et al.* 1978, Kiszely 1978). This theory seems to have originated at the time when the only skulls that had been found were those belonging in a Burgundian context. Subsequently nearly all deformed examples discovered in a Frankish context have been considered to be foreigners (von Pfeffer 1972-3, Heinz 1974). It seems, however, that the number of skull deformations found in Germany and France, in Alemannic or Frankish contexts, is at least as large as that in Burgundian contexts. As far as Germany is concerned, the numerical analysis made by Kiszely (1978) and the discoveries in the Heidelberg (Kindler 1957a, b, 1958) and Mainz (von Pfeffer 1972-3) regions should not be ignored. All these discoveries were made in Frankish contexts.

In the present state of knowledge, it does not seem possible any longer to

reduce skull deformation in Europe in the early Middle Ages to a single system. So far as southwest France is concerned, there is no evidence to support the hypothesis that direct links are the only explanation. There is also, as noted above, the possibility of convergent development. Numerous ethnological and archaeological studies have shown the almost universal occurrence of skull deformation; modification of the body seems to be the most common motive (Pereira & Sakka 1983). More pragmatically speaking, the reasons seem numerous, often complex, and not always explicable. However, one can distinguish (Gélis 1984) religious and social reasons, the quest for the development of memory and intelligence, and the pursuit of a fashion or aesthetic ideal, sometimes associated with some sexual symbolism. The protection of the skull and in particular of the fontanelles from cold and bruising, by covering the head with headbands, seems to have been one of the determining factors in the multiplicity of deformations in regions like southwest France in the 18th and the 19th centuries.

Boys would wear the headband for a few years only, whereas girls would continue to wear it night and day, since it was part of their headdress. This explains why the majority of deformed skulls from the 19th century belonged to females. Thus it seems that in France, and more particularly in Languedoc, deformation was merely the secondary result of protecting the head. Fabié (1968) writes: 'It is a common habit, born of prejudice and popular practices; it is the routine maintained by many midwives, which explains why these practices persisted until the end of the 19th century.' Gélis (1984), however, is not completely convinced by this explanation.

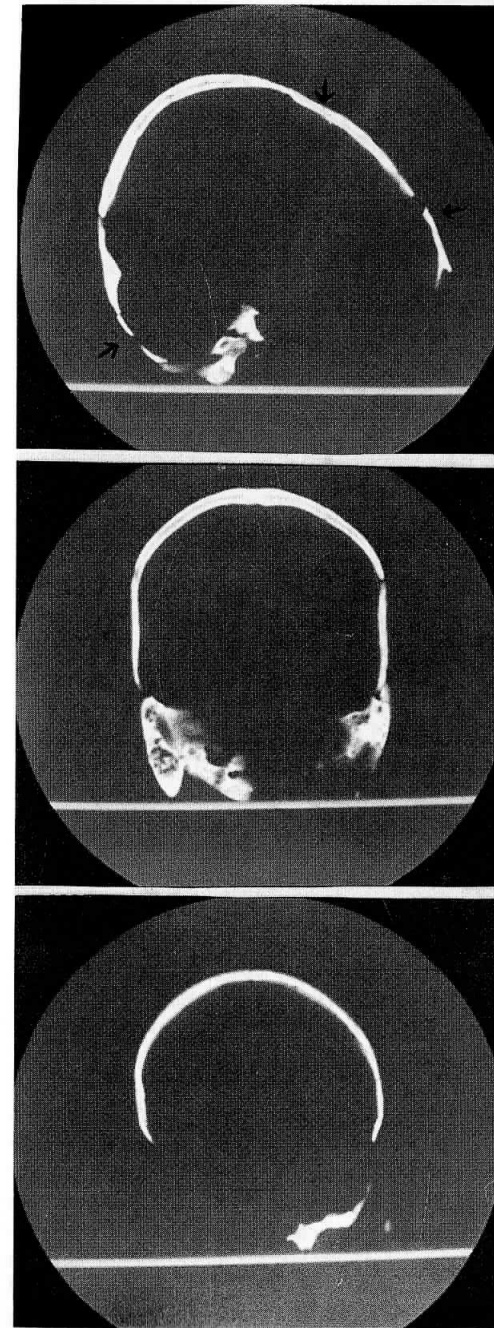
In fact, if these factors did extend the practice, one must ask what was its first cause. Skull deformations may be partially symbolic but there is no written evidence to support this. In southwest France, and more generally elsewhere in France, in relation to the deformations of the historic period, in order to 'identify the rule and get rid of what is fortuitous and anecdotal' (Galay 1986), three research strategies are necessary.

*To seek systematically for deformed skulls in cemeteries and to establish their chronological contexts*

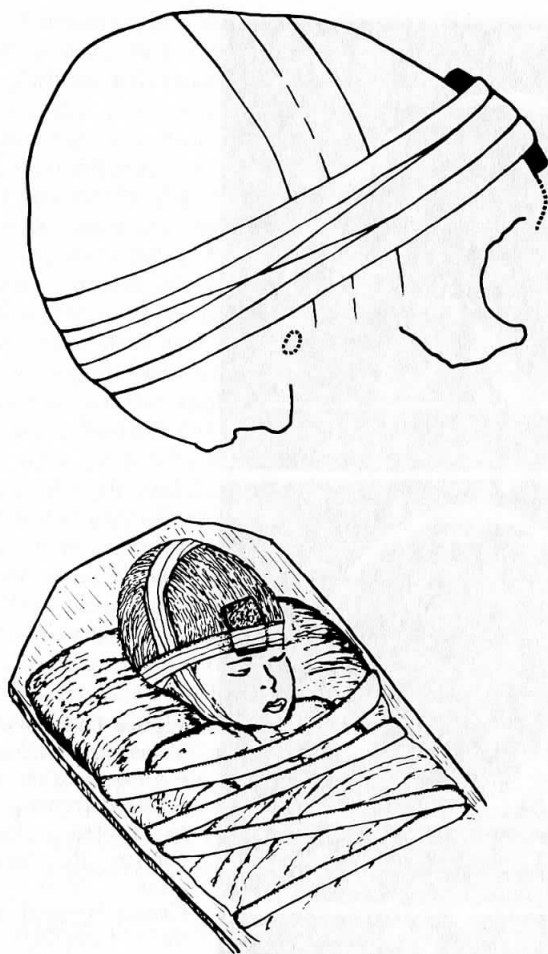
In the course of our study we came to realize that anthropologists were not always able to recognize skull deformations, especially the relatively feeble circular-type deformations, and therefore it would be worth reassessing the material from earlier studies. Moreover, the chronological context of many skulls should be redefined, paying particular attention to those discoveries where the grave goods are still available.

*To define the deforming agent*

The numerous attempts at classifying artificial skull deformations have often been contradictory. Most authors underline the existence of a correlation between the agent used, the way it is applied, and the resulting skull shape. Falkenburger (1938) distinguished between two main groups of deformations, and was followed in this by Fabié (1968): First, front-back deformation,



**Figure 12.5** Skull 30 from Vénéreque: determination by CAT scan of the pressure points of the deforming medium (scan by Professor Phillipe Castan, Service de Neuro-radiologie, Hôpital Guy de Chauliac, Centre Hospitalier Universitaire de Montpellier). Top: sagittal para-medium section of skull – note the thinning of the vault as a result of the disappearance of the diploë at the level of the points of pressure (arrowed); middle: frontal section at the level of the mastoid processes – head bands have not been applied at this level, and consequently the diploë is thick and the structure normal; bottom: frontal section at the level of the anterior part of the bregma, showing the thinning of the cranial vault and the disappearance of the diploë.



**Figure 12.6** Attempt, as the basis of the data provided by the CAT scan, to position the deforming medium on an adult skull (above) and on an infant in the cradle (below). As in the 19th-century 'Toulousian' style, the headbands perhaps formed part of a more elaborate arrangement constituting a headdress.

most often the result of a frontal and occipital constraint which limits growth on the anterior-posterior line and allows lateral and vertical expansion. This is characterized by the flattening of the frontal in the sagittal plane and by a flat surface level with the glabella. This deformation can be either straight or oblique (on the occipital level, the lambda region can be influenced or not by this process of deformation). Second, circular deformation, where the skull is tightly bound by plaits or bands along an orbito-occipital or parieto-occipital plane, catching the frontal behind the frontal bumps and limiting growth in

the anterior-posterior line as well as laterally. There are straight and oblique types.

Between the four general groups thus obtained, there are obviously possible intermediary forms, since a deformation depends on several factors: tightness of the constraint, the plane of application, the duration of application, and the age of the child. The original shape of the head is also relevant, since it is probable that a brachycephalic skull will be deformed differently from a hyperdolichocephalic one. Other modifications which alter the resulting shape of the base and the front have been described by Fabié (1968).

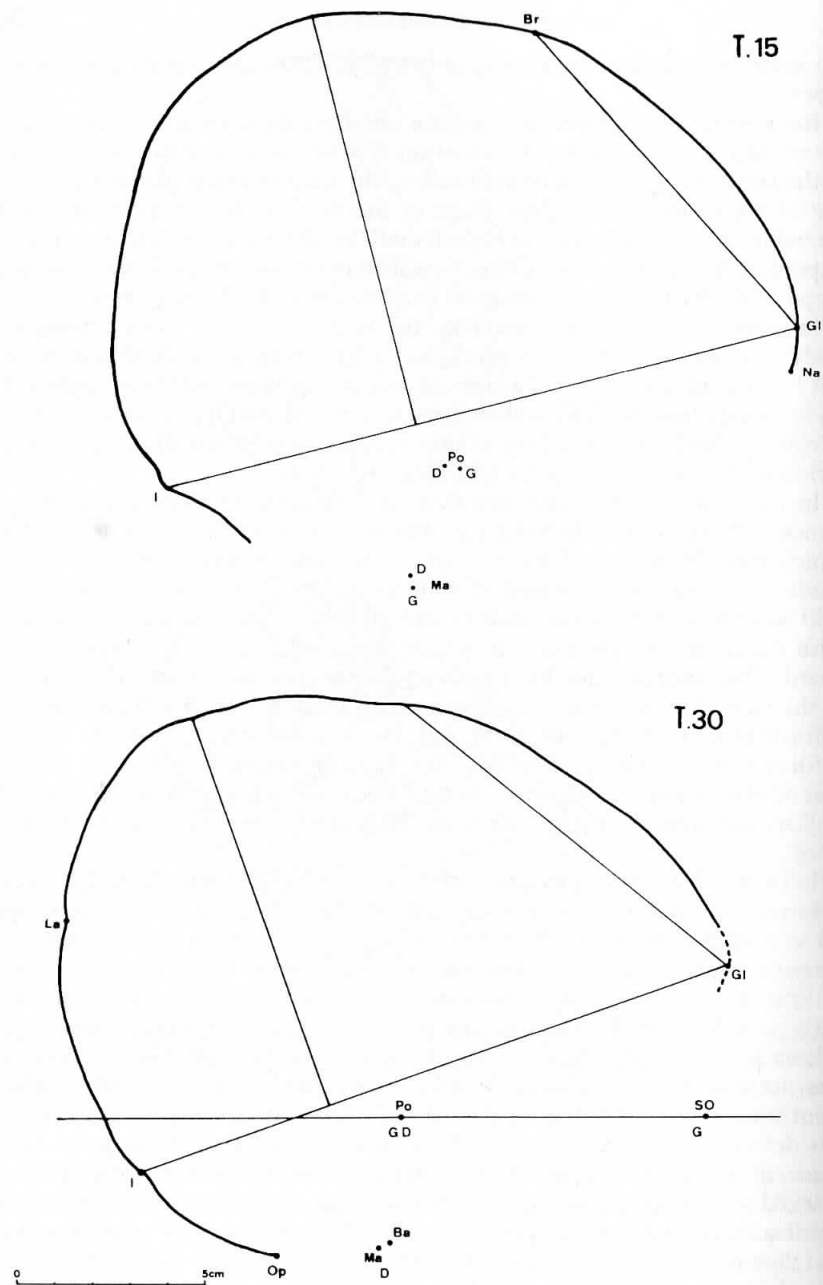
In order to confirm or repudiate the results obtained from osteoscopic analysis, and to underline certain facts, we have carried out skull sections by CAT scans, which show that where the deforming agents had been applied the diploë has disappeared and both internal and external skull plates are in contact (Crubézy 1986). With the help of osteoscopic analysis, this allows a reconstitution of the methods of constraint (Figs. 12.5 & 6).

In the southwest the Lécourt skull and number 30 from the Vénérque cemetery have deformations of the oblique fronto-occipital type (Fig. 12.7), which have been caused by the application and wearing of at least two headbands during a major part of childhood. Firstly, a fronto-occipital band held straight above the eye sockets underneath the parietal bumps and level with the inion, which might have been used together with a small frontal board. Then another band has passed behind the bregmatic fontanel, definitely in the frontal plane. In the case of the skull from grave 15 at Vénérque, the deformation is of the same type but much less complex (Fig. 12.7). The deformation of Coutras, the Gallo-Roman deformations of Vendée such as that of Montségur, and most of the skull deformations known as 'Toulousian' or 'Languedocian' from the 15th to the 19th centuries are of circular type (Fig. 12.8).

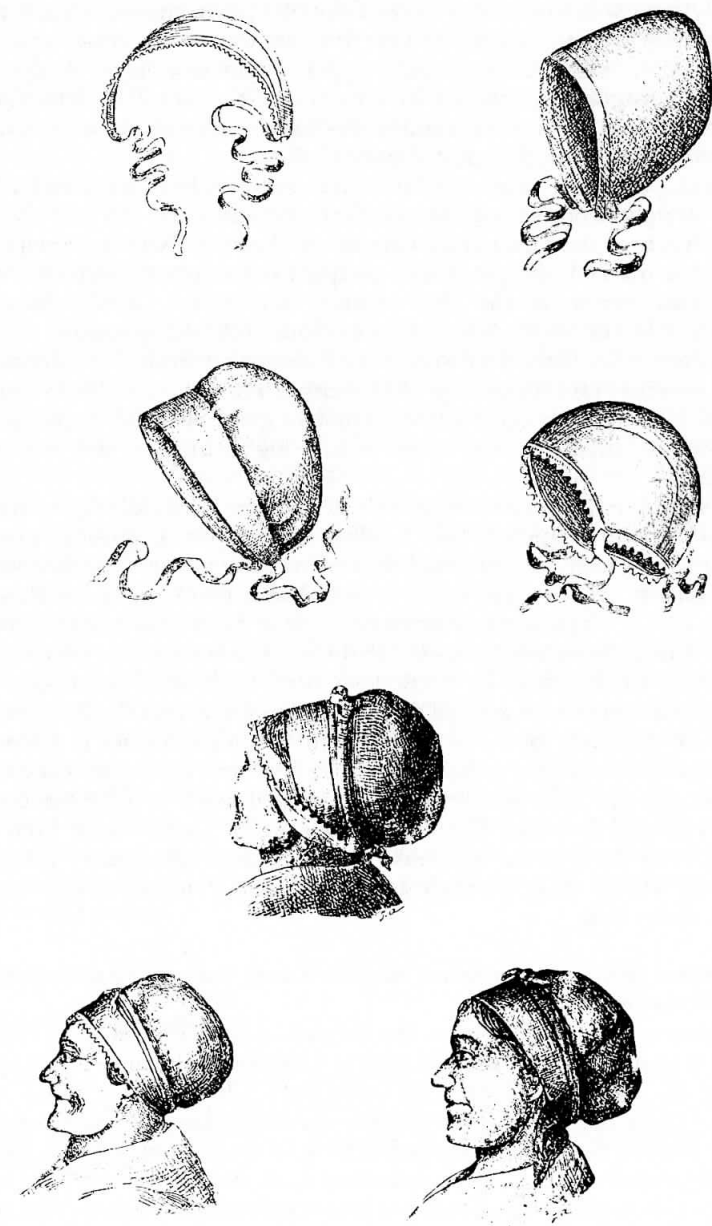
In France the sex of individuals of the early Middle Ages which show skull deformations can rarely be ascertained from the osteometrical and osteoscopic characteristics of the hipbones, which are the most reliable ways of determining sex. This is because the discoveries were made a long time ago and the skeletons are badly preserved. They seem, however, to be predominantly female, and the most deformed examples are known to be female (Vénérque, grave 30, Maule, three out of four skulls from Alsace whose sex was determined, also deformed Gallo-Roman females from Vendée, which seem somewhat more deformed than the males). In general males are much less deformed (Vénérque, grave 15). One can relate these findings to those made in Languedoc in the 19th century, where deformations were more marked and more numerous in women, who wore the same bonnets and headbands throughout the period during which their skulls were growing, and then throughout their life, whereas boys ceased to wear them between the age of four and six (Calvet *et al.* 1964, Gélis 1984). In some areas the methods used caused less deformation, thus only females would show any effects of them in adulthood.

In the early Middle Ages, both in France and throughout Europe, the more





**Figure 12.7** Sagittal profiles of deformed skulls from Vénerque, datable from the second half of the 6th to second half of the 7th centuries. The male example, number 15, is noticeably less deformed than number 30. This is no doubt related to the character and duration of the deforming process.



**Figure 12.8** Examples of deforming agents and the manner in which they were worn in the 'Toulousian' style of the 19th century (after Ambialet 1893).

frequently quoted deformations were of the oblique fronto-occipital type. In fact, such deformations in their extreme form are the most spectacular and the easiest to spot, whereas the circular types might not have always been reported. Photographs published by Kiszely (1978) show that deformations are not very marked and some could be due to wearing a single headband held tightly on the forehead, as seen in Figure 12.8.

In France post-Merovingian deformations are mostly of the circular type, but one straight fronto-occipital case from between the 9th and the 11th centuries has been described at La Charité-sur-Loire in Nièvre (Pereira *et al.* 1984). Some marked oblique fronto-occipital deformations were known in the Toulouse region in the 19th century (Collection Delisle, Musée de l'Homme, photo no. 4670). There are variations in the deformations, since the point where the headband was worn varied somewhat from one individual to another; thus the Frankish woman of Dossenheim (Calvet *et al.* 1964) wore the same type of deforming agent as the woman in grave 30 at Vènerque, but the fronto-occipital headband was worn slightly higher and did not rest on the brow ridges.

In the southwest and elsewhere in France in the early Middle Ages, mothers or nurses sometimes applied two headbands from birth, possibly made of leather or strong linen, one of which was worn quite forward on the forehead on some infants. As noted above, boys would wear them only until the age of four, five or six, whereas girls continued to wear them. It is probable, on the basis of evidence from other regions, that these bands consisted of some kind of headdress or kerchief, or were associated with such headwear. This constraint was not always applied as tightly as possible, and the Routier skull could be an example. Between the 7th and the 8th centuries in Gironde a change in the form of these headbands can be noted from the shape of the deformations, and this was probably associated with a different type of headdress among women. The constraining agent cannot have been very different from those in the Toulouse region in the 18th century (Dingwall 1931, Gosse 1855), although there is not sufficient evidence at this stage to suggest a direct link.

#### *Research into special circumstances associated with individuals with artificial skull deformations*

A compilation of publications on the discoveries of deformed skulls has not shown any elements – for example, such as variation in the funeral rite, special grave goods, etc – associated with these cases. On the other hand, when compiling the inventory of the 18 French sites of the late Roman Empire and the early Middle Ages which yielded deformations, we noticed that seven of them had yielded more than one deformed skull, despite the fact that, on the majority of sites, only a small area had been excavated or studied. This might be because the anthropologists who examined these series were already aware of the phenomenon, and hence noticed some less spectacular deformations which others might have disregarded. But in the majority of cases the discoveries came from the same area of the cemetery, as at Vènerque and

St-Hilaire de Riez, or even from adjacent graves, as at Dachstein (Heinz 1974). This fact has also been noted in other areas of Europe where deformations are generally infrequent, such as Sezezin (Simon 1979), Mayence-Münchfeld (von Pfeffer 1972–3), etc. Such data are not easy to interpret, but may be linked to the wish of some parents or the habit of some wet nurses or midwives to impose a particular method of skull binding at the time of the child's birth.

## Conclusion

It does not seem possible at the present time to reduce the practice of voluntary skull deformation in the early Middle Ages to a single narrow system. Even if in eastern Europe we can demonstrate mechanisms of direct connection, in the southwest of France, in France in general, and perhaps in other regions of western Europe diffusionist theories which consider this practice to be relevant give preference to matters which do not take account of previous situations. Moreover, they are founded on ambiguous methodology and a selective attention to parts of the evidence, whether from the archaeological point of view (deformations known before the invasions), or the ethnological (multiplicity of centres in the world), or the anthropological (association of this practice with 'alien' subjects).

The phenomenon of skull deformation resulting from the wearing of headbands by babies, followed by the wearing of a tight headdress or kerchief from the age of four or six by girls, appears in our areas of study to show continuity from the Gallo-Roman into medieval times. The multiplicity of oblique fronto-occipital deformations, however, between the 5th and the 7th centuries, could reflect a predominant custom of securing the head or of wearing a headdress. The discovery in southwest France in the 8th century of circular deformations similar to those found some centuries later could reflect a regional evolution, which led to the perpetuation of certain traditions of dress in that region.

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## 13 The palaeodemography of medieval populations in Czechoslovakia

MILAN STLOUKAL

### Introduction

Cooperation between anthropologists and archaeologists has a long history, so much so in the past that with many individual scholars, especially in the 19th century, it was not possible to make any distinction. Now, however, increasing specialization has separated both disciplines to such an extent that there is often little dialogue between them. Palaeodemography is a potential meeting point, since its results are of importance to both sides even though each has its own forms of analysis. The material from the Middle Ages lends itself to interdisciplinary research, because for this period the anthropologist can count on results from large sets of skeletons analysed for age and sex determination. In Czechoslovakia the cemeteries of the Old Slavic period, from the 7th to the 11th centuries, offer nearly ideal conditions for such palaeodemographic research (Fig. 13.1). Many data sets from this period meet two basic requirements: they are extensive and complete – that is, they include remains of all interments made in the cemetery.

### Procedural problems in palaeodemographic analysis

This idea of completeness, however, raises one of the main problems of palaeodemographic analysis. It is, in fact, rare for archaeologists to be able to assert that they have thoroughly examined a whole burial ground. It is also a problem that, at the time when a cemetery was being used, older graves might have been totally destroyed and the bones from them simply thrown away. The famous scene with Yorick's skull in Hamlet, which reputedly takes place at a time not too remote from the Old Slavic period, ought to put anthropologists on their guard against any excessive optimism about the completeness of their data sets. This problem is often passed over in silence, yet from the beginning of the modern period, ossuaries were established and bones from destroyed graves were removed there. This is tangible proof that demographic analysis of cemeteries often rests on an untenable premise, for the hundreds of fragmentary skeletons in charnel houses show what a large part of the data may actually be missing. We can only hope that in early medieval

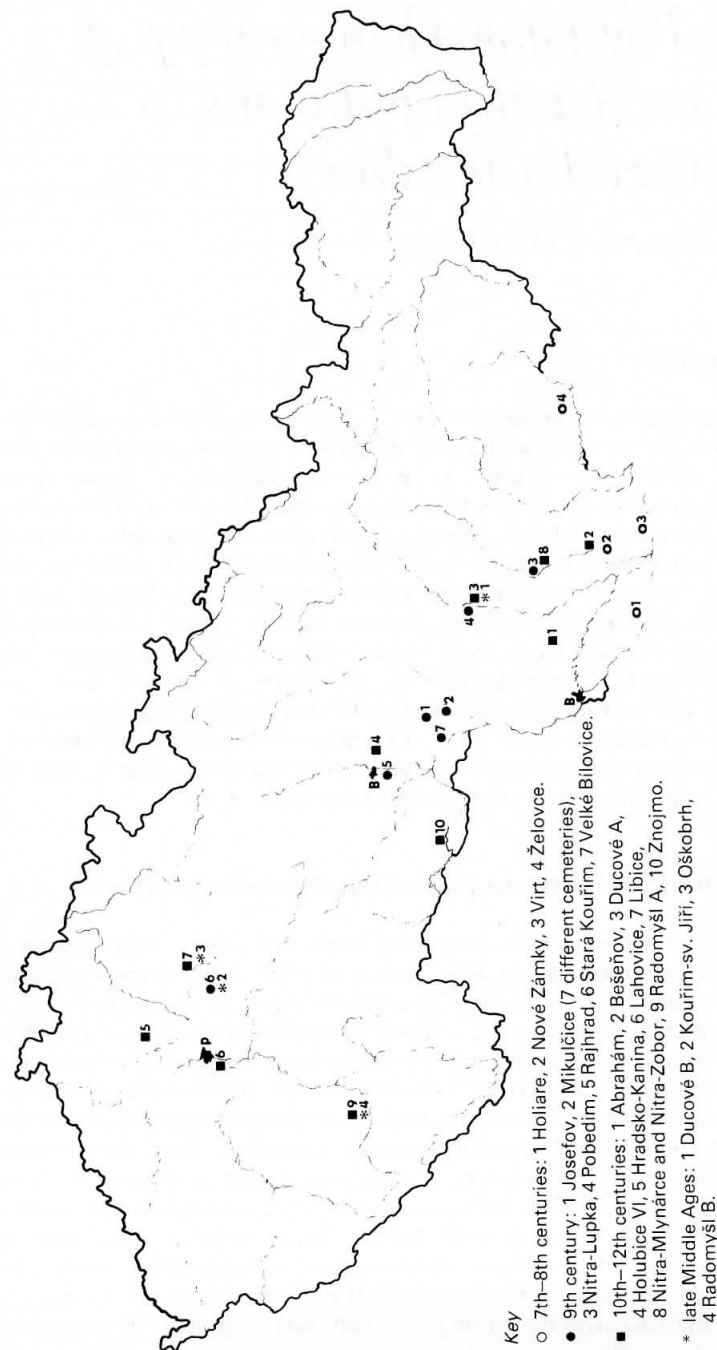


Figure 13.1 Medieval cemeteries from the territory of Czechoslovakia providing data sets usable for palaeodemographical analysis.

cemeteries, which tended not to be used for as long as modern ones, the losses inflicted by the destruction of old graves were not so serious.

Much more interest is normally focused on the question of whether the remains discovered in a cemetery truly represent all the dead or, more precisely, whether the set studied comprises the whole population. Palaeodemographic analyses, for example, almost always display an insufficient number of infant skeletons, but sometimes also there is a conspicuous imbalance between the numbers of males and females. The relative lack of male burials is usually said to be due to migrations, the slave trade or the fact that men who died in war were buried on the battlefield. We hope that in our analyses of age structure, the perceived contradiction between the actual data and our expectation of roughly equal numbers of men and women is not significant. The real stumbling block is the lack of children, which could completely imbalance our results, in particular making practically all the calculated death-rate values false.

For many years palaeodemographers have spent time working on this problem. Having agreed on the assumption that infant skeletons have not been preserved or that the babies were not buried for various reasons, most of them are looking for methods which would render it possible to complete the missing values and to reconstruct the original numbers.

### Missing infant burials – the Czech evidence

There are currently 32 Old Slavic skeletal assemblages from the territory of Czechoslovakia which satisfy the criteria of completeness as well as size. The smallest of them contains only 56 skeletons and the largest – those from Ducové and Mikulčice – contain 1875 and 1539 skeletons respectively. These have been classified by age and sex and 'life tables' have been constructed, according to which life expectancy at birth –  $e_0$  – varied between 21.7 (Mikulčice 12) and 37.4 (Kounim), with most of the cemeteries showing between 24 and 32 years. These values seem to be high, being very close to the analyses of life expectancy for the 19th century, which were derived from more reliable demographic data. We cannot believe that the 9th and 19th centuries would have been so alike in this respect. In our opinion the explanation lies in the partial absence in the cemeteries of the lowest age group of children, particularly those up to one year old but also, to a lesser extent, those who were somewhat older. Twice in our 32 sets this group is not present at all, and in half of the sets the number of new-born and very young babies forms less than 5 per cent of the total. Only in one case does their share surpass 20 per cent, but even that is still rather a low figure.

In order to reconstruct the missing numbers we have used two methods, one proposed by Bocquet & Masset (1977) and the other by Neustupný (1983). By these methods the  $d_0$ -values, which indicate the number of children who died before reaching the age of one, have risen: 13.3 and 15.8 per cent, respectively, are the minima, while 41 per cent is the maximum determined

**Table 13.1**  $d_0$  values in the Old Slavic sets for numbers of children dying prior to one year old.

|                       | uncorrected | corrected after<br>Bocquet & Masset<br>1977 | corrected after<br>Neustupný<br>1983 |
|-----------------------|-------------|---------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Abrahám               | 1.1         | 27.2                                        | 17.0                                 |
| Bešeňov               | 1.5         | 30.2                                        | 26.7                                 |
| Ducové A              | 8.8         | 33.4                                        | 33.3                                 |
| Ducové B              | 13.8        | 24.4                                        | 13.3                                 |
| Holiare               | 0.0         | 23.5                                        | 13.3                                 |
| Holubice VI           | 3.8         | 30.0                                        | 26.7                                 |
| Hradsko-Kanina        | 1.8         | 23.9                                        | 13.6                                 |
| Josefov               | 12.2        | 31.9                                        | 30.0                                 |
| Kouřim-sv. Jiří       | 2.1         | 15.8                                        | 13.3                                 |
| Lahovice              | 5.1         | 27.3                                        | 40.6                                 |
| Libice                | 22.0        | 31.0                                        | 36.7                                 |
| Mikulčice 1           | 1.1         | 30.7                                        | 26.7                                 |
| Mikulčice 2           | 7.6         | 27.0                                        | 20.0                                 |
| Mikulčice 3           | 5.1         | 33.6                                        | 33.3                                 |
| Mikulčice 4           | 9.3         | 31.8                                        | 30.0                                 |
| Mikulčice 11          | 11.0        | 31.5                                        | 30.0                                 |
| Mikulčice 12          | 11.4        | 34.7                                        | 36.7                                 |
| Mikulčice-Klášteřísko | 5.6         | 33.6                                        | 33.3                                 |
| Nitra-Lupka           | 11.2        | 30.0                                        | 23.3                                 |
| Nitra-Mlýnářce        | 2.7         | 26.1                                        | 16.7                                 |
| Nitra-Zobor           | 0.0         | 33.9                                        | 36.7                                 |
| Nové Zámky            | 2.2         | 29.4                                        | 20.5                                 |
| Oškobrh               | 1.8         | 24.6                                        | 31.1                                 |
| Pobedim               | 2.6         | 41.0                                        | 40.0                                 |
| Radomyšl A            | 3.4         | 31.2                                        | 27.1                                 |
| Radomyšl B            | 1.0         | 33.1                                        | 30.7                                 |
| Rajhrad               | 0.8         | 35.3                                        | 36.7                                 |
| Stará Kouřim          | 0.7         | 24.3                                        | 13.3                                 |
| Velké Bílovice        | 6.0         | 30.2                                        | 26.7                                 |
| Virt                  | 5.7         | 26.4                                        | 16.7                                 |
| Znojmo                | 5.6         | 26.5                                        | 16.9                                 |
| Želovce               | 1.1         | 28.6                                        | 23.3                                 |

Note. For location and date of cemeteries see Figure 13.1.

by both methods of reconstruction. These numbers might be considered trustworthy. However, the  $e_0$ -values – that is life expectancy – have fallen: according to Bocquet & Masset's method it varies within the limits of 8.9 and 31.8 years, while Neustupný's method gives figures ranging from 12.0 to 33.6 years. Is it possible to be content with these results? Unfortunately it is not, because in demography it is accepted that converted  $e_0$ -value – that is,  $1/e_0$  – is equal to the gross birth rate. Thus if  $e_0 = 20$ , the birth rate reaches 50 per 1000; if  $e_0 = 30$ , it is only 33.3 per 1000. But if the  $e_0$ -value is lower than 20, then the

**Table 13.2**  $e_0$  values in the Old Slavic sets for life expectancy at birth.

|                       | uncorrected | corrected after<br>Bocquet & Masset<br>1977 | corrected after<br>Neustupný<br>1983 |
|-----------------------|-------------|---------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Abrahám               | 33.1        | 22.9                                        | 29.1                                 |
| Bešeňov               | 27.1        | 17.2                                        | 20.4                                 |
| Ducové A              | 24.6        | 14.6                                        | 16.9                                 |
| Ducové B              | 27.1        | 22.9                                        | 28.5                                 |
| Holiare               | 29.7        | 22.0                                        | 26.6                                 |
| Holubice VI           | 27.4        | 18.1                                        | 21.2                                 |
| Hradsko-Kanina        | 29.6        | 24.0                                        | 29.2                                 |
| Josefov               | 22.9        | 16.6                                        | 19.5                                 |
| Kouřim-sv. Jiří       | 37.4        | 31.8                                        | 31.4                                 |
| Lahovice              | 30.9        | 25.2                                        | 18.6                                 |
| Libice                | 21.8        | 20.5                                        | 19.4                                 |
| Mikulčice 1           | 28.7        | 18.5                                        | 22.4                                 |
| Mikulčice 2           | 28.6        | 21.9                                        | 26.4                                 |
| Mikulčice 3           | 24.1        | 14.4                                        | 16.8                                 |
| Mikulčice 4           | 23.6        | 17.1                                        | 20.1                                 |
| Mikulčice 11          | 23.9        | 17.5                                        | 20.2                                 |
| Mikulčice 12          | 21.7        | 14.2                                        | 15.6                                 |
| Mikulčice-Klášteřísko | 24.9        | 14.6                                        | 17.0                                 |
| Nitra-Lupka           | 26.3        | 18.4                                        | 22.8                                 |
| Nitra-Mlýnářce        | 32.6        | 22.8                                        | 28.2                                 |
| Nitra-Zobor           | 32.8        | 15.9                                        | 16.9                                 |
| Nové Zámky            | 28.7        | 19.7                                        | 25.4                                 |
| Oškobrh               | 26.2        | 13.8                                        | 18.5                                 |
| Pobedim               | 22.0        | 8.9                                         | 12.0                                 |
| Radomyšl A            | 27.0        | 18.8                                        | 22.9                                 |
| Radomyšl B            | 28.0        | 16.8                                        | 20.3                                 |
| Rajhrad               | 25.3        | 12.5                                        | 14.0                                 |
| Stará Kouřim          | 36.4        | 27.1                                        | 33.6                                 |
| Velké Bílovice        | 29.5        | 18.8                                        | 21.6                                 |
| Virt                  | 29.6        | 20.6                                        | 25.8                                 |
| Znojmo                | 31.3        | 23.3                                        | 29.0                                 |
| Želovce               | 29.0        | 19.8                                        | 23.7                                 |

Note. For location and date of cemeteries see Figure 13.1.

gross birth rate rises over 50 per 1000, which is hardly admissible in historical populations. Yet it is just such an extremely low value of life expectancy that Neustupný's method reconstructs for almost half of our sets, and, even worse, that Bocquet & Masset's method reconstructs for 20 out of the total of 32 sets. It must be emphasized that, from the demographic point of view, it is nearly impossible for the birth rate to reach or even exceed 50 per 1000 for a sustained period. This considered, the original uncorrected life tables appear to be more acceptable, but how do we explain the amazing lack of infant skeletons?



### Explaining the lack of infant burial

I have no doubt that a certain number of the infant skeletons are really lost. It has to be supposed that some children were not buried at all, maybe because dead babies were not regarded as human beings and were thus not favoured with a burial, especially when they had not been accepted by the father of the family. In such cases there may be a sort of selection or regulation of population growth. In the Christian era, to which most of our sets belong, possibly unchristened children were not allowed burials in a churchyard. Yet this explanation meets with several well-founded objections. It is not certain whether the rules of baptism were kept strictly in the early Middle Ages. We know, for example, that emergency christenings often took place, after which it was difficult to give evidence against any mother who was anxious to provide her baby with a Christian burial, even though the child had been born dead. Let us rather admit the probability that many pagan customs, to which infanticide among others certainly belonged, continued well into the Christian era, as is suggested by historical accounts. Then we must also accept that a certain number of skeletons of babies who were properly buried may not have survived, possibly because they were buried in shallow graves which were destroyed by surface activity, as is demonstrated, for example, by Nemeskéri (Acsádi & Nemeskéri 1970). Alternatively, maybe small infant bones are more apt to decay, and not in every burial ground are the soil conditions such that we can record graves where the skeleton has not been preserved.

Thus a certain number of children belonging to any population investigated are missing; that is beyond dispute. Nevertheless, we should consider the possibility that the number of missing infant burials is not as large as we might think. Perhaps the babies who died at an early age may have been fewer than we have imagined up till now, and it is worth looking for a moment at living conditions during the early Middle Ages. It is generally supposed that they were much inferior to those of, say, the 19th century. Yet it is possible that we are mistaken, especially for the period before large urban agglomerations, bringing epidemics and many other disadvantages, occurred. In the anthropological material a significant break can be observed in the cranial development of populations during the later Middle Ages. This is often described as brachycephalization, but it was not only a question of rapid increase of the average value of cranial index. The process was certainly broader, and its origins are still being looked into, but it does force us to recognize a major change in the conditions of life.

Living conditions in the early Middle Ages, where the bulk of our sets come from, could have been much more wholesome, more natural. We might, in fact, postulate that breast-fed infants were protected from less serious infections, so that mortality was indeed far lower than one would assume. In addition, an organized society would have been able to resist the danger of overpopulation, thus avoiding the consequent difficulties. In fact, population explosions and the ensuing great migrations may have been generated by just such relatively healthy conditions among populations who had already

experienced some of the advantages of civilization without becoming acquainted with the drawbacks of its more advanced phases. The origin of such a development could be traced back before the actual Migration period and the expansion of the Slavs could be seen as its later manifestation.

We are still far from being able to prove such processes on the basis of anthropological or archaeological material. Palaeodemographic studies, however, hint at possible solutions to complex questions, the importance of which reach far beyond the limits of any single discipline.

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## RURAL SETTLEMENT

# 14 *The lower Vltava basin: an attempt at a regional approach to the settlement history of the early Middle Ages*

MARTIN GOJDA

## Introduction

Various aspects of settlement geography – that is, the study of the development, forms, and structures of early historic settlement – have recently been among the most frequently discussed problems of medieval studies in general, including the archaeology of the Slavs. Such investigation of settlement patterns, common in all countries using advanced archaeological methods, is especially well founded in Marxist historiography, based as it is on a preference for the material evidence of society and on a search for the internal structure of economic systems, their dynamism, and their changes. The study of past settlement geography inevitably involves many interrelated disciplines and only through cooperation between the social and natural sciences can increased knowledge of our human history be achieved.

In Bohemia the last 10 to 15 years have seen an expansion of archaeological work, involving regional analyses at both the site and local levels. This has been the result of several factors which are determining the conduct of current field archaeology, not only in Czechoslovakia but also in other European countries. In Bohemia three basic factors have led archaeologists to change their general field strategy: first, exploitation of energy resources, especially the opencast mining of brown coal, which causes drastic changes to the landscape; second, gradually increasing industrial activity requiring the construction of new roads and building complexes on the outskirts of towns; and finally, the use of heavy machinery in agriculture and the introduction of deep ploughing, which may cause total destruction of all evidence for past processes.

These factors have substantially changed the current ratio between systematic research excavations on the one hand and those of a rescue, salvage nature on the other. This has meant that the specialist of one period or culture must, at least in the field, become more generalized in order to cope with multiperiod and multicultural occupation sites where the environment has favoured them through time. In particular, local or district archaeologists have



had to widen their general knowledge to cover all the prehistoric cultures which have continuously occupied the territory under investigation.

In the history of archaeology the present period may be called 'the era of salvage'. Such a label indicates both a period in which research is drastically restricted by the time factor and a period which needs a new approach to current archaeology. This involves the formation of a new methodology and a statement of those problems on which rescue excavations should focus.

In spite of these problems we must confess that extensive industrial and building activities provide us with openings which could be compared to finding and publishing historical documents hitherto unknown to the public. The ditches for water or gas pipelines and the newly built highways are, in fact, unique archaeological trenches going through a region and can provide evidence for settlement patterns in various types of landscape. Extensive stripping of arable layers carried out during the building of new housing estates, hospitals, roads, sports grounds, etc. gives us a chance to examine the settlement history of selected sites and to explore the intensity of occupation through prehistoric and early historic times.

As a result, emphasis is now laid on a single activity, that of heuristics, within a structure of general methodology which may be expressed in a linear form: heuristics; criticism; description – seriation – analysis; interpretation or explanatory synthesis. Moreover, within this activity the subactivity, excavation, is the one most stressed. Considering the fact that we cannot but put up with this state of affairs, any special interest in a specific period must often be put to one side. We must acknowledge that restrictions, especially on description, seriation, and analysis, have caused an increase in excavated material deposited in finds collections which remain unexamined. These sources will, in many cases, be analysed later by archaeologists who did not themselves carry out the excavations, a fact which stresses the need for site data and finds to be documented precisely. In addition, one major question concerning the approach to the investigation of sites exposed to damage stands out: should we sample a great number of them or focus attention on fewer, selected localities which could thus be excavated more or less completely. This is essentially the problem of deciding between quality and quantity.

Sampling different landscape types within the country seems to be the best decision. This approach enables us to coordinate the results of rescue excavations with repetitive surface collection and with detailed study and reconstruction of the landscape. Such an approach was used, for example, in the case of the Dutch island of Texel (Woltering 1979) and in the extensive project carried out in some parts of southern and central England, where settlement forms of the Iron Age were studied in the context of a long-term research excavation of Danebury hillfort (Cunliffe 1982). This approach has now also been adopted for Bohemia (Klápště 1985, p. 349) and is fully justified considering the possibilities of our archaeology. Surface collection (systematic traversing, plough walking, field survey) has become an integral part of the study of selected regions and its significance increases as the landscape changes. Systematic field survey helps not only in prospecting for entirely new sites of

the prehistoric period, the early Middle Ages or those mentioned in documents of the higher Middle Ages, but also in providing precise topographical identification of sites discovered earlier and in establishing the extent or character of sites affected by building activity.

The widest systematic field surveying is now being carried out in Poland as part of an extensive national project called *Archaeologiczne Zdjęcie Polski* (AZP). The objectives of this project include not only the rescue of archaeological monuments and registration of sites now being destroyed by the increasing industrialization of the country, but also the recording and reconstruction of the landscape, which at least partially still keeps its original appearance.

In the regional approach the investigation of settlement patterns is particularly emphasized for the Middle Ages. This results partly from the possibility of assembling and analysing various kinds of historical sources for a given time-space unit, and partly from the fact that the medieval landscape is more suitable for reconstruction than the prehistoric. Thus medieval settlement history allows a deeper insight into the reality of the past than any similar study for prehistoric societies. In Bohemia the study of the settlement geography of the Middle Ages follows two basic lines: first, the study of settlement development during the early Middle Ages (6th–12th centuries); second, the study of changes in building forms within the settlement at the turn of the early and higher Middle Ages (late 12th–early 14th centuries). The origin of these two lines of inquiry lies in the traditional periodization of medieval history by Czech scholars. The early Middle Ages have been seen from an ethnic viewpoint – that is, the archaeology of the Slavs. There is no fixed chronological dividing line, however, between the interests of archaeologists studying the Slavic period and those of the Middle Ages; the boundary itself varies from the end of the 10th century to the 12th century. The interests of the so-called Slavic and medieval archaeologists are thus often the same as for the whole framework of Czechoslovak archaeology. This fact is institutionally confirmed by the existence of two separate departments within the Prague Institute of Archaeology of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences: that of Medieval Archaeology and that of the Archaeology of the Slavs.

The investigation of settlement history has concentrated on the changes in building forms at the turn of the early and higher Middle Ages. Since the 1970s the Department of Medieval Archaeology of the Institute of Archaeology in Prague has been carrying out a systematic investigation of four Czech territories, in several cases focused on village microstructures (for the latest survey see Klápště & Smetánka 1986). Several regions were selected on the basis either of their comparatively well-preserved environments or of the need to save sites within the context of their landscapes damaged by the industrialization and building activity.

As for the early medieval (Old Slavic) period, our scholars have been analysing previously gathered archaeological information for particular regions, often including significant hillforts. To make their approach as

exhaustive as possible, they have re-evaluated the contemporary conditions, mainly those of environment, and studied the development of settlement topography within this framework. All historical sources which can throw light upon the relations between the medieval and recent settlement of the Czech landscape are being utilized (e.g. Zápotocký 1977, 1978, Váňa 1977). These studies should be conceived both as basic surveys of relevant information about time-space units and as starting points for detailed regional analyses.

### The lower Vltava basin

My own work on the settlement history of the lower Vltava valley should be considered in a similar way. The purpose of this work, some of which has been published (Gojda 1988), was to provide a basis for the detailed study of microstructures within one of the most important early medieval territories of Bohemia. Here, survey and analysis of sources were used to answer questions about the development of settlement geography. A catalogue of all the accessible historical sources appeared as the first result, showing the relationships between settlement locations and basic environmental factors. The sources were analysed and evaluated on the basis of the heuristic part of the work and conclusions were drawn. Of particular importance is the list of archaeological sites, since it was necessary in many cases to discover the location of old finds which, if left without topographic context, would have lost their value for the study of settlement. The recording of the location of sites is the first stage in their future detection and detailed investigation.

The basic method for the study of settlement used in current Marxist historiography is cartography in the form of distribution maps in which the location of sites within the region under study is drawn for each temporal layer. Such maps were also used for the lower Vltava region. They enable us to evaluate and compare changes through the medium of all accessible sources. Thus they can be especially useful in studies on the regional level (or mesostructure) in which the precise topography of the sites (within 100–200 m) and the use of small-scale maps are required. In these the categories 'settlement (habitation) site' and 'cemetery' have been distinguished on the basis of archaeological evidence (see Buchvaldek 1973, Rulík 1981, p. 17).

The archaeological sites were dated by a comparative method based on the relative and absolute age of individual elements of material culture using typology and morphology. In our case it was possible to use some published analyses of finds from stratified positions, especially from the excavation of Budeč hillfort. Such a method, of course, has its limitations.

The territory under investigation is demarcated by natural geography and its area amounts to 360 square kilometres. From the beginnings of the Neolithic down to the modern period, this part of Bohemia has always been one of the most densely occupied regions. From the chronological point of

view, the period subjected to analysis covers the time between the 3rd and the 12th centuries, which can be subdivided into three main blocks: first, the culmination of old German settlement in Bohemia (traditionally referred to as the late Roman period in the 3rd to the 4th centuries: Phase I in my framework); second, the period of progressive changes in the ethnic structure of Bohemia following the Slavic invasion (the 5th to the 7th centuries: Phase II or Germanic and Phase A or early Slavic); and, third, the period when the Slavs were finally established in Bohemia and the gradual rise of the early medieval Czech state began, including the colonization of the landscape (Phase B, the 8th to latter half of the 9th centuries; Phase C, the end of the 9th to the 10th centuries; Phase D, the 11th to the 12th centuries).

The analysis is based on historical sources relating to the villages situated in the region under investigation. Also, with regard to the chronology of the work, the highest importance is attached to archaeological finds. About 350 items were available and I managed to locate 199 of them on a 1:10 000 map, but only approximately 60 per cent of the archaeological sites can be positively identified as being either a habitation site or a cemetery. For the dating of these sites I used not only numerous studies dealing with the analyses of regional pottery production, metal tools, etc. but also analogous finds from adjacent regions, as well as discoveries made during recent field survey. The oldest written sources, place names, pre-Romanesque and Romanesque architectural remains, and church dedications were also used as important sources of historical information (Figs. 14.1, 2, & 3).

Observations on the relationships between settlement units and the basic factors of environment, such as location in the landscape, gradient of a settled slope, elevation of a site above a water course, orientation, elevation above the sea, distance between the site and its water source, average temperature and rainfall, type of climatic zone, length of the growing season, and reconstructed vegetation cover, were also taken into account.

Having gathered the data on environmental conditions and historical sources the following partial findings emerged. The whole territory in question can be said to have had favourable conditions which influenced the choice of settlement sites. The region is rich in water sources: rivers and brooks form a dense and fairly regular network. The soil cover is represented partly by black (chernozem) and brown soils, partly by alluvial soils. From the climatic standpoint the region lies in what I have designated as zones A2 (optimum mild zone) and B1 (half-mild zone).

The number of archaeological finds increases through time. As for the settlement sites, many of them (14, all precisely located) are dated to Phase A, where they form 32 per cent of all archaeological units (unlike, for example, the B–C–D period, where they account for only 12 per cent), and they reflect considerable settlement activity, especially in the northern neighbourhood of Prague. Cemeteries, on the other hand, appear to be more frequent in later periods (21 per cent in the B–C–D period as against 12 per cent in Phase A).

Written sources prove the existence of more than a quarter of all the villages (28) before AD 1200. Surviving documents relate to the patrimonies of the

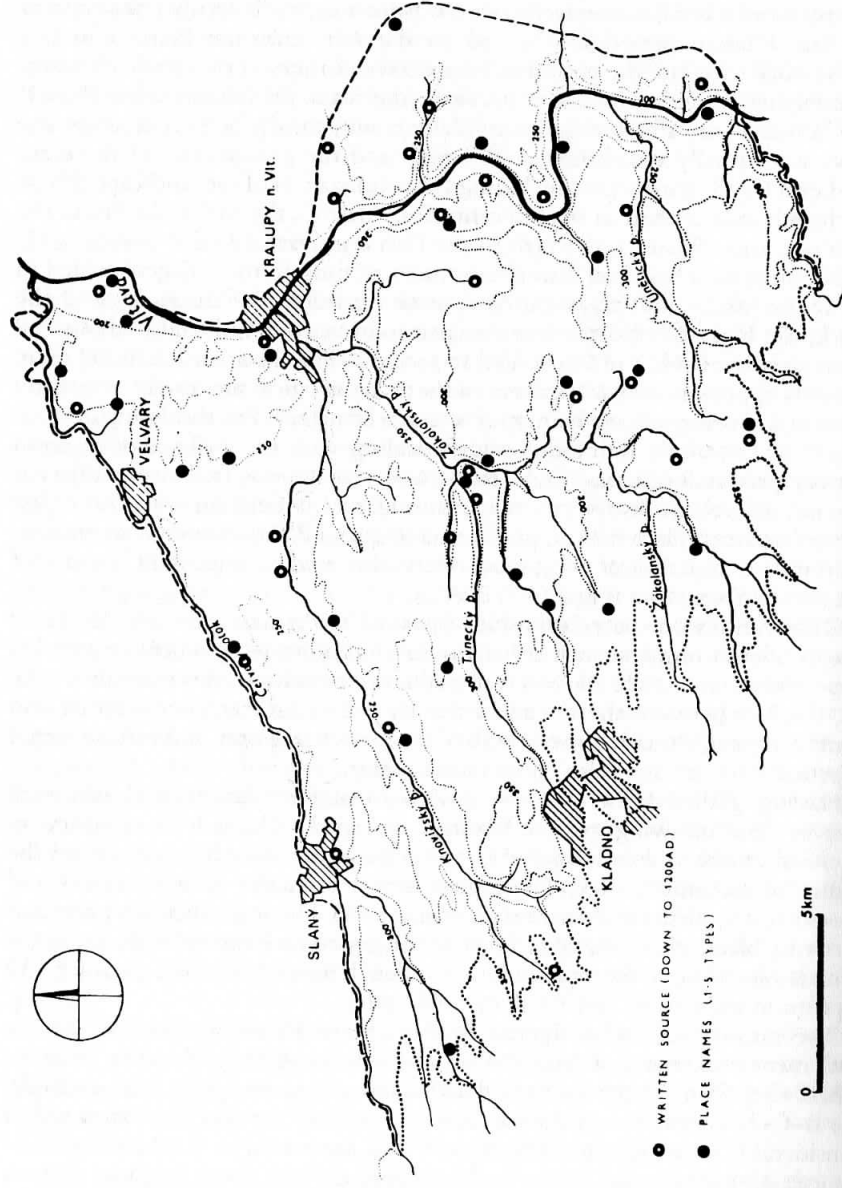


Figure 14.1 Settlement distribution: written sources and place names.

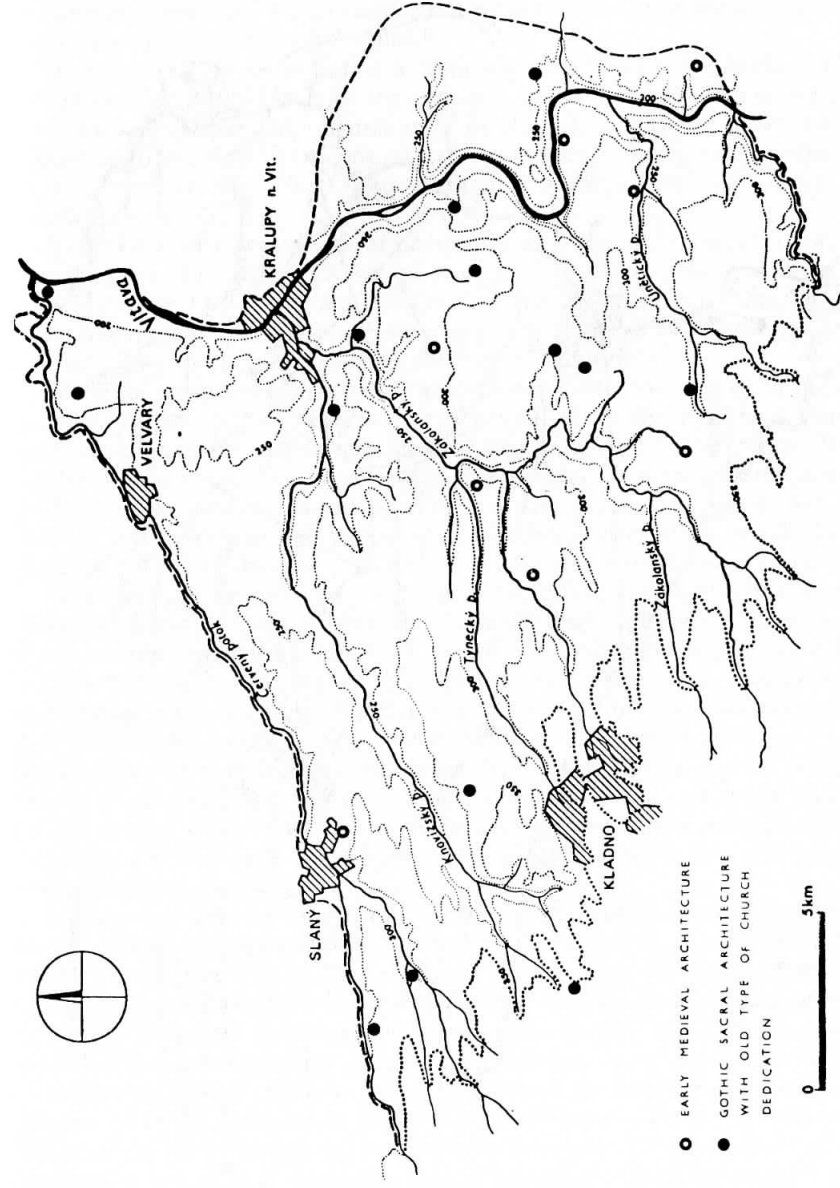


Figure 14.2 Settlement distribution: architecture, church dedication.



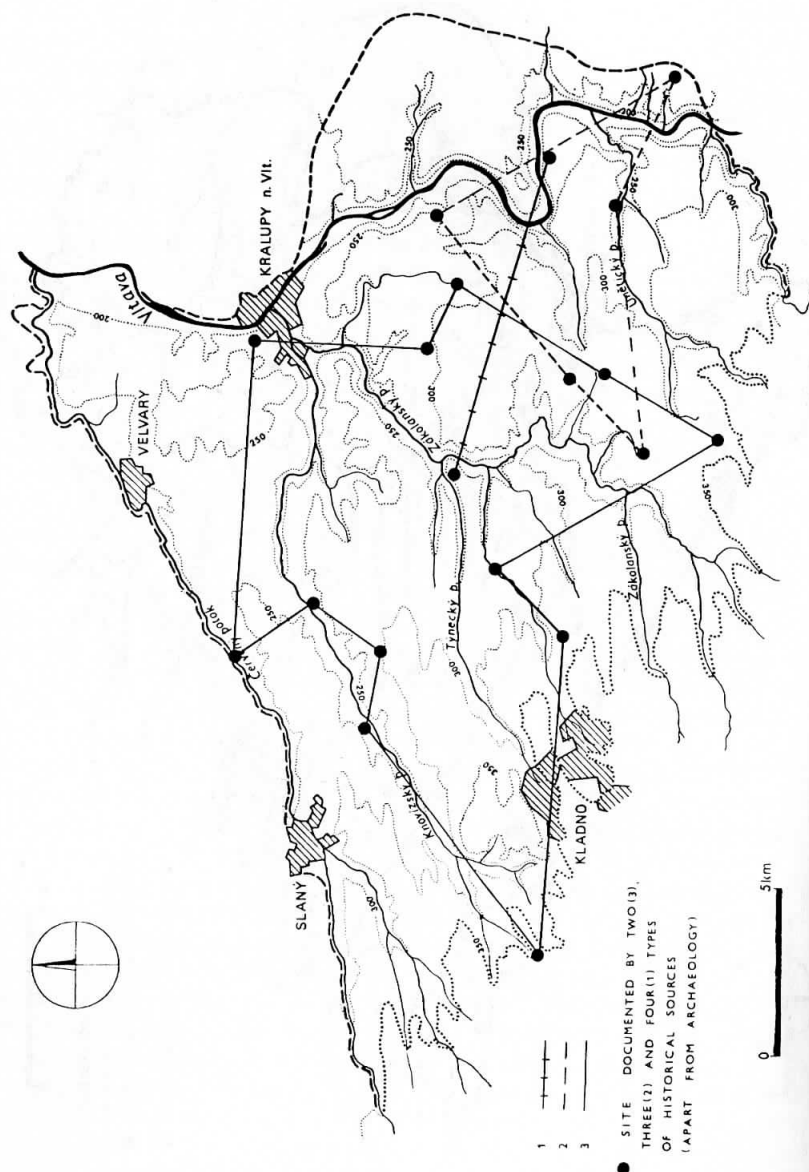


Figure 14.3 Settlement distribution.

Strahov, Břevnov, and Prague (St George), Ostrov monasteries, and the chapters of Vyšehrad and Stará Boleslav. Clerical institutions obtained their possessions (land with villages and serfs) by donations from the prince, who had originally been the only landlord.

Place names help us to define a territory which linguists call the 'oldest settled area'. Here, places with the ending '-ves' in Czech appear to refer to bond villages. Other place names are typical of the beginning of settlement expansion from this oldest settled area into economically less productive regions, types such as Týn, Ůjezd, and family endings '-ice' and '-ovice', of which there are 27.

Preferences for certain kinds of dedication can help us distinguish churches dating from the earlier phases of the Middle Ages, when most were consecrated to Our Lady and St Peter. Taken together with the 13 pre-Romanesque and Romanesque stone churches, this evidence can be considered as another manifestation of settlement activity.

When the relationships between the settlement sites and their environment are investigated, certain tendencies can be traced. In the pre-Slavic period (3rd–5th centuries) the sites were situated at a higher elevation (280 m above sea level on average) in zones which had previously been covered almost exclusively by oak and hornbeam forests. The distance between sites and streams was shorter in that period than in others, with minor brooks being preferred. Within the early Slavic period of the second half of the first millennium more advantageous settlement locations were sought, not only on lesser slopes but also on lowland silts, while the distance between the sites and water sources increased slightly. Between 1000 and 1200 people started to occupy locations which appear to be less suitable. In the lower Vltava basin, this change was not a shift of settlement to greater altitudes, since these areas had already been occupied by the first Slavs. On the contrary, the new settlements were on lower land, being built on slopes of higher gradient (nearly 5°), facing mostly northwards and eastwards and at an average distance of 200 metres from a water source. In spite of these unfavourable factors, however, the sites of the 11th and the 12th centuries were, in fact, in areas with the longest growing season for crops.

In order to gain a better understanding of settlement location in the region, nearest-neighbour analysis was used to obtain data on their clustering. As a result we can state that in Phases I and II the spacing of settlement sites was fairly regular, although it should be admitted that the total number of sites known so far is much smaller than those of the Slavic phases. By contrast, a tendency towards settlement clustering appeared in the succeeding period.

Other analysis of settlement patterns produced the following results. Some faint traces of site grouping in the period 300–500 can be observed close to the Vltava itself, particularly between Sedlec and the great curve of the river near Podmoráň, as well as in the central part of the valley of the Dřetovický Brook (Fig. 14.4). Three sites, however, stand in isolated locations and are comparatively high above sea level, at about 300 metres. We know almost nothing about the relationships between habitation sites and their cemeteries. In the

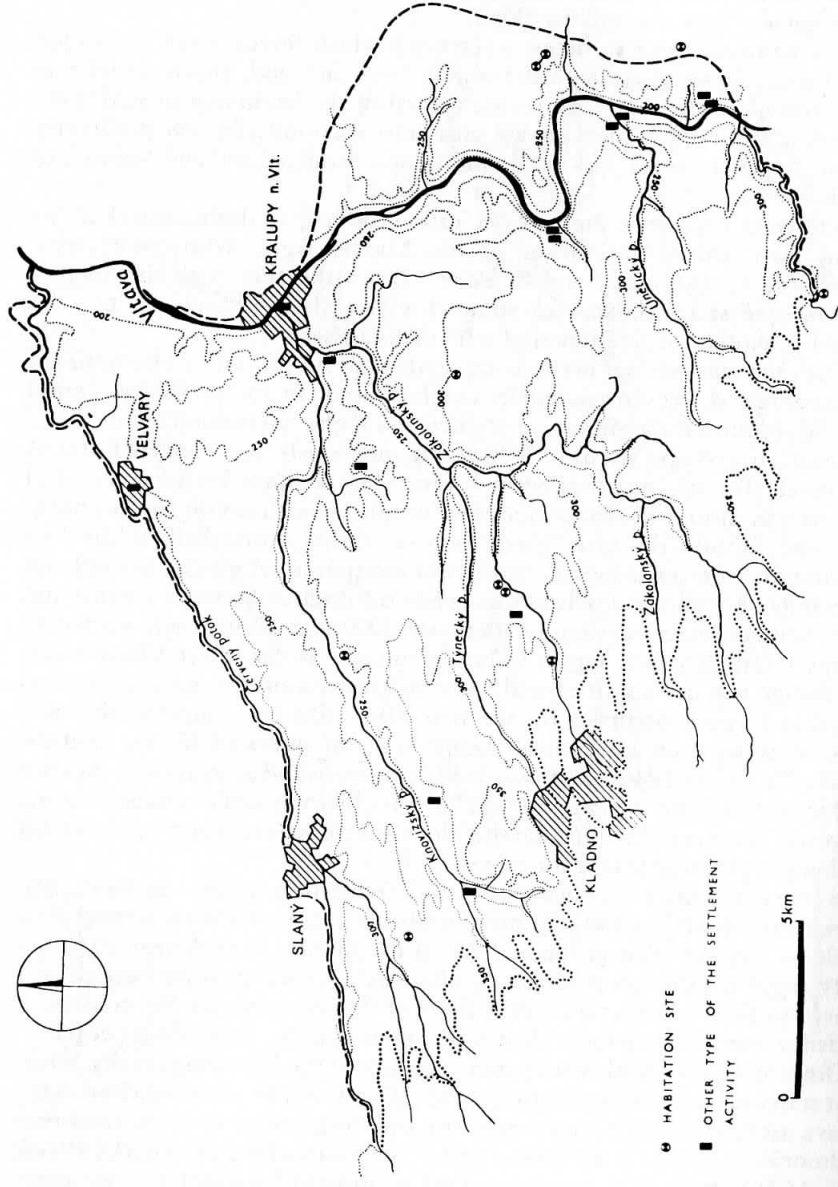


Figure 14.4 Settlement distribution: archaeology, Phases I and II.

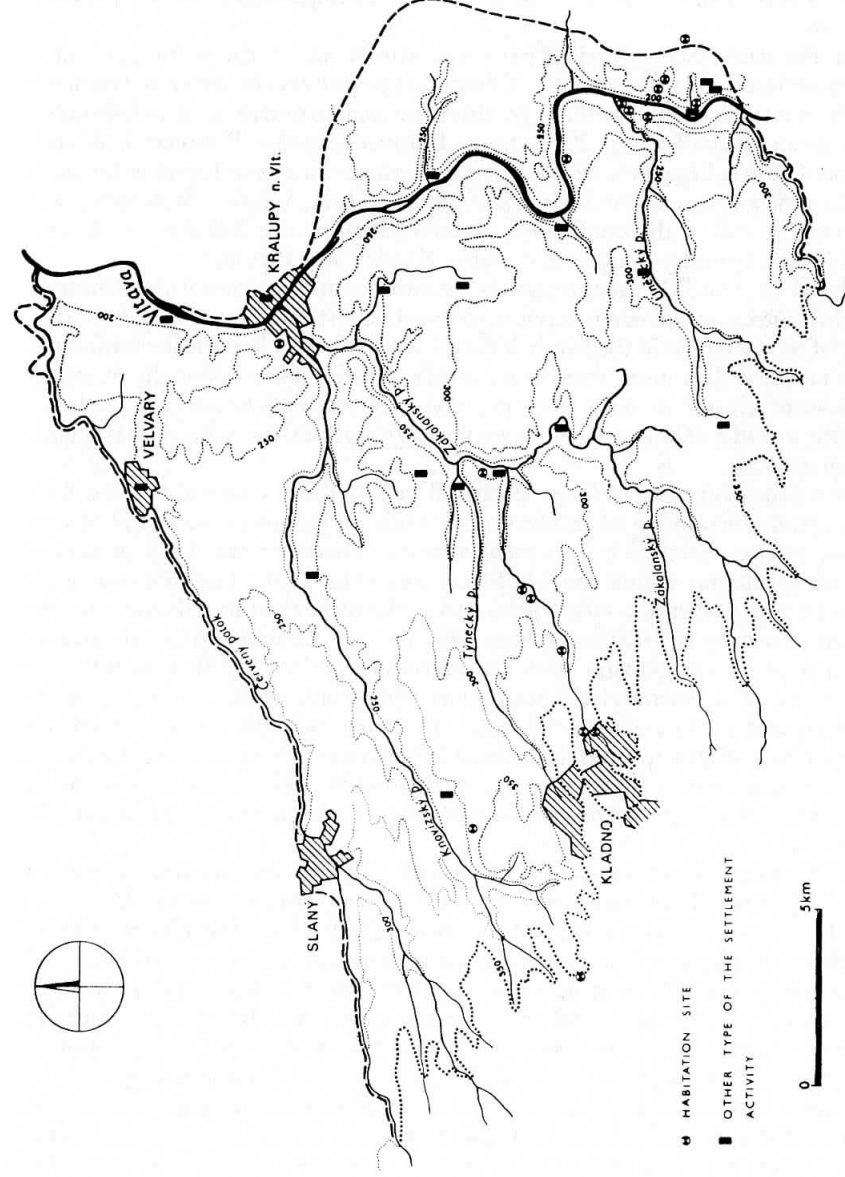


Figure 14.5 Settlement distribution: archaeology, Phase A.

final phase of the Migration period (Phase II) and in the early Slavic period (Phase A) the density of the settlement network increased, especially in those areas where some traces of clustering were distinguishable in the previous periods.

In the early Slavic period extensive clustering of the settlement sites, characterized by the occurrence of Prague-type pottery, occurred to the north of Prague (Fig. 14.5): Roztoky, by this time an accumulation of 10 habitation sites in an area of about 20 hectares; Bohnice-Zámka; Bohnice-Tříkrálka; Praha-Čimice; Levý Hradec. Another grouping of sites was found in the basin of the upper course of the Dřetovický Brook (Dubí, Vrapice, Stehelčevce and Dřetovice) and at the confluence of three streams, the Zákolanský, Dřetovický, and Týnecký (Budeč, Zákolany, Kováry and Blevice).

If, as I have already mentioned, the quantity of archaeological sites and finds is taken into account, early Slavic settlement activity was more extensive than that of the Germans in the lower Vltava basin. We shall see that the number of sites in Phase A is more than twice as many, even if we count the Roztoky settlement cluster as only one site, and this contradicts findings gathered during a study of the settlement pattern throughout the whole of Bohemia (Zeman 1976).

From the beginning of Phase B, the hillfort period, to the end of Phase C (c. 700–1000), the number of archaeological finds appears to increase, and this can be ascribed to intensified settlement activity. There are two large groups of site accumulation within the whole territory (Fig. 14.6). The first consists of localities situated close to the Vltava and to the mouths of its tributary streams in the territory of Sedlec-Kralupy (40 sites are known within an area of 30 sq. km). In comparison with the preceding periods we find an intensive clustering of archaeological sites on the right bank of the Vltava, between Klecany and Větrušice, although most of them are actually in the western part of the town of Kralupy and lie at about 250 metres above sea level. The second is a concentration of find spots west of the middle Zákolanský Brook and its tributaries, where the density of finds per square kilometre is the same as in the first area.

Three local clusterings can be seen within this agglomeration including the area of Vrapice-Dřetovice (seven localities in 1 sq. km), the area of Buštěhrad (six localities in 0.25 sq. km), and the area of the Budeč hillfort hinterland (14 localities in 4 sq. km). Settlement accumulation can also be observed to rise during this period both in the area around the town of Slaný and in the basin of the lower course of the Bakovský Brook, north of Velvary. The settlement pattern in the period 700–1000 can thus be described as the concentration of several small groupings within two larger settlement agglomerations.

Figure 14.7 shows the changes that can be observed in the final phase of the early Middle Ages, between 1000 and 1200 and Figure 14.8 gives the overall distribution for Phase B–C–D. On the one hand we can trace a continuity of settlement activity in places settled during the previous period, although in some special areas, for example in the hinterlands of the Budeč and Levý Hradec hillforts, the density of archaeological evidence decreases. On the

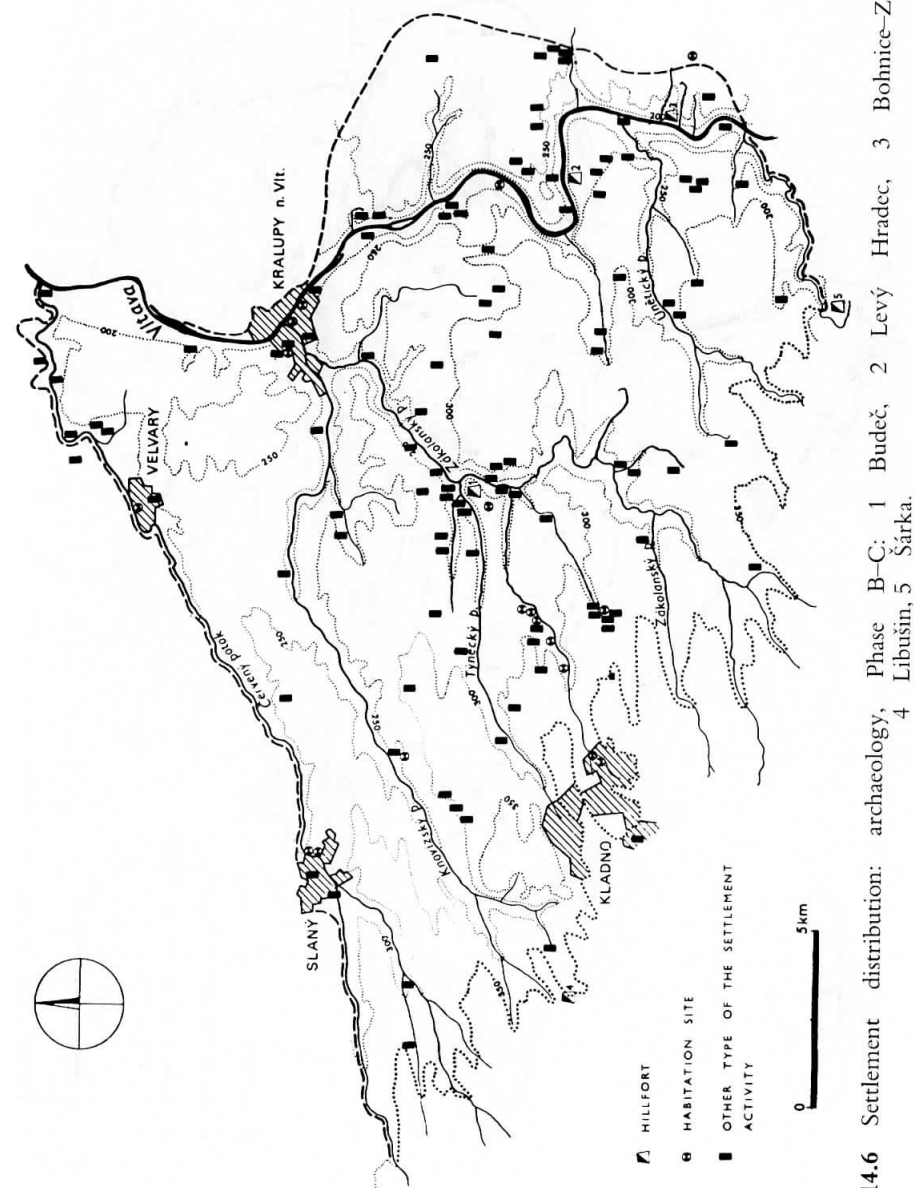


Figure 14.6 Settlement distribution: archaeology, Phase B–C: 1 Budeč, 2 Levý Hradec, 3 Bohnice-Zámka, 4 Libušín, 5 Šárka.



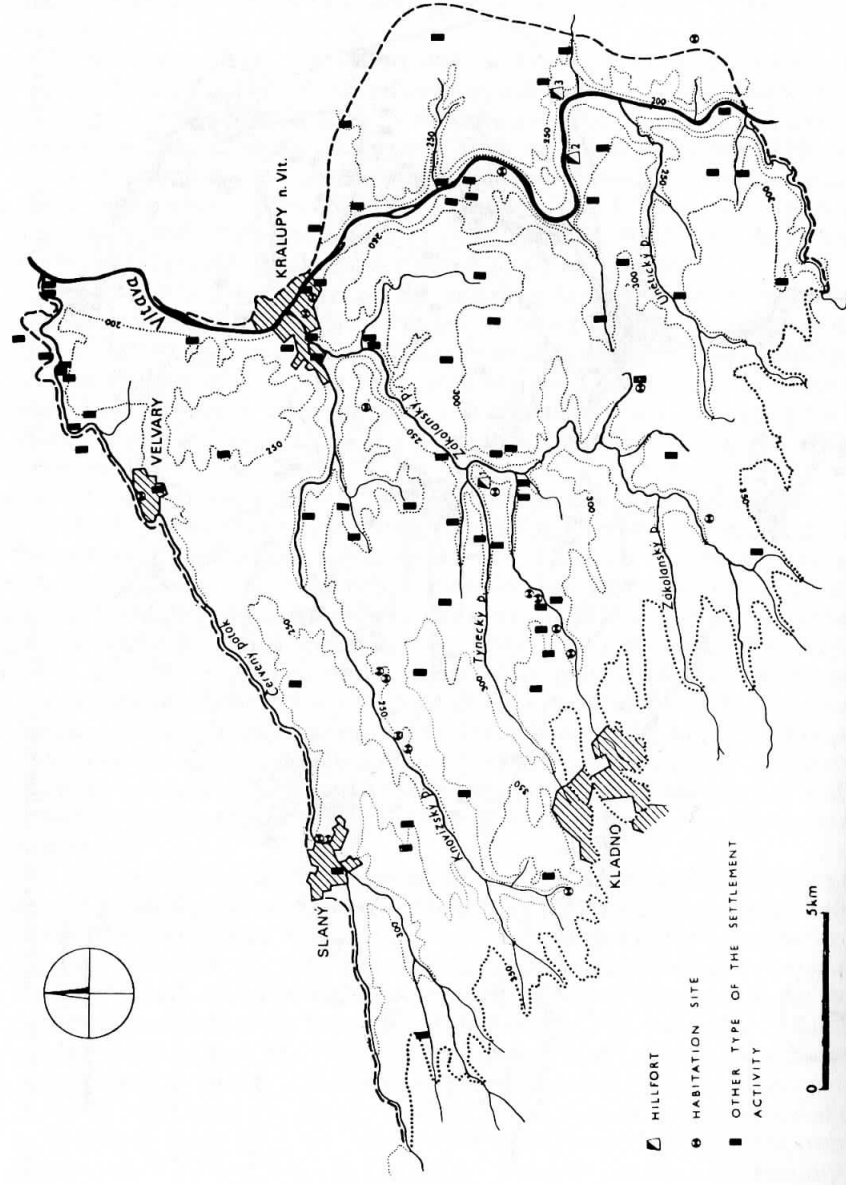


Figure 14.7 Settlement distribution: archaeology, Phase D: 1 Budeč, 2 Levý Hradec, 3 Klecany.

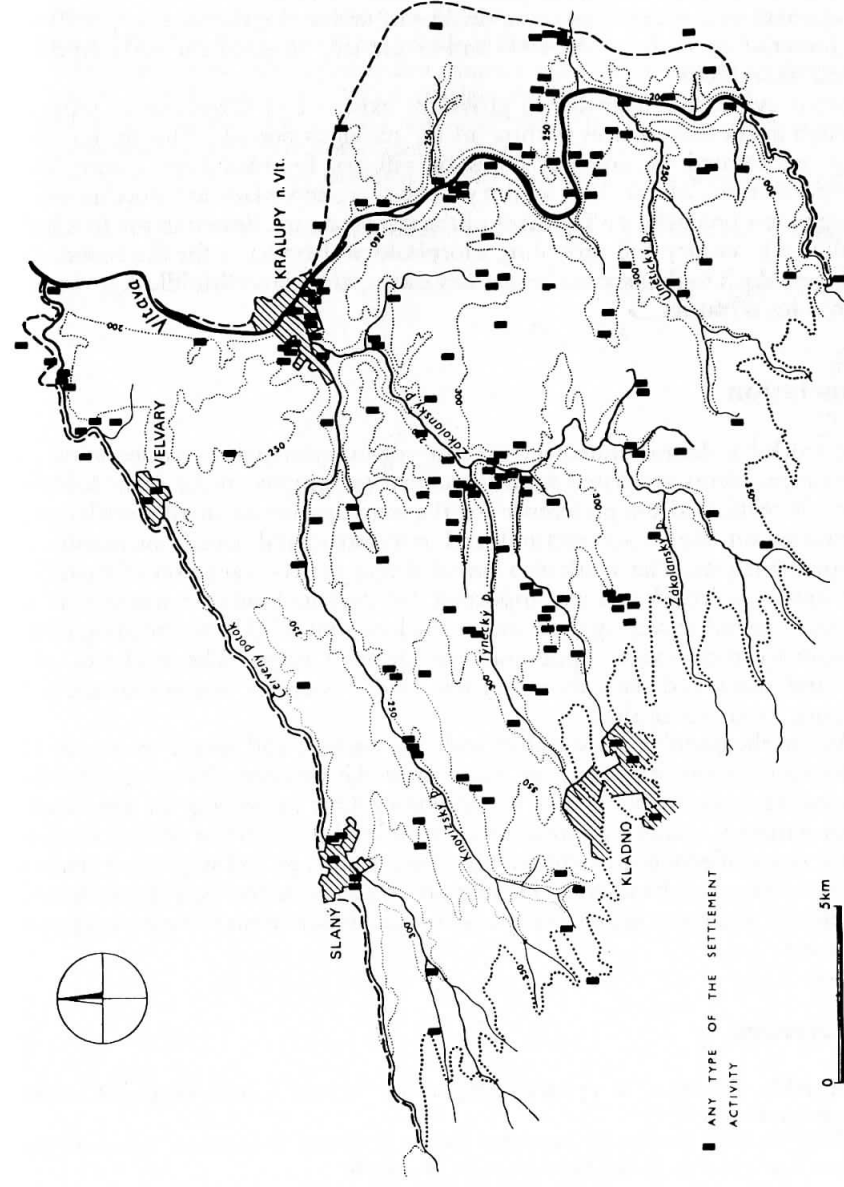


Figure 14.8 Settlement distribution: archaeology, Phases B-C-D.

other hand, there is an increase in the total number of irregularly spaced habitation sites situated close to streams. Thus the overall pattern can be described as dispersed with irregular settlement forms.

We have evidence of the same density of archaeological sites in preurban agglomerations both in 700–1000 and in the late phase of the early Middle Ages (1000–1200).

Some evidence is available to prove the existence of 12th-century villages situated in the same places as those of the previous periods. This means that they are located outside the cores of villages founded later during the transformations of the 13th century. Their ground plans are documented, more or less precisely, on the maps of the state cadastre, drawn in the first half of the 19th century and providing morphological evidence for the economic changes which took place in the country during the higher Middle Ages in the 13th–14th centuries.

## Conclusion

The work has demonstrated the necessity of interdisciplinary cooperation in solving problems associated with settlement geography in the early Middle Ages. It reinforced the preference for the investigation of smaller settlement territories on the mesostructural and microstructural levels, primarily as regional analyses. The work also revealed that the re-evaluation of material previously collected is very important for certain kinds of analysis. It is necessary to rediscover by these means the locations of old sites enabling us to reconstruct their exact topography on detailed maps. The study of old cadastral maps and data about former land possession was important for locating a number of sites.

As for the problems associated with the current and future strategies of archaeological investigation, we must stress the necessity for systematically excavating early medieval rural communities. Our knowledge of these basic social settlement units is at present very restricted, though the villages used to be the cores of economic exploitation of the landscape and important centres of production and handicraft. Habitation sites suitable for excavation should be selected and investigated as soon as possible, before their remains disappear for good.

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# 15 *Rural settlements in the 9th and 10th centuries in the Danube Valley in Serbia*

GORDANA MARJANOVIC-VUJOVIC

## Serbian settlement

Among the many Slavic tribes which, in the first decades of the 7th century, crossed the Danube and settled in the Balkan peninsula, were the Serbs (Ostrogorski 1959), who stayed on the right bank of the river. Their presence in the Danube valley during the 7th century is attested not only by the typical 'finger-like' fibulae and remains of settlements containing pottery of the Prague type (Marjanovic-Vujovic 1983) but also by records from Byzantine sources as well (Vizantijski izvori 1955). Yet even though the existence of the Slavs since the time of their crossing the Danube can be traced from century to century, their complete assimilation into, and familiarity with, both the geographical and cultural environment and the native population took some time. Indeed, only from the 9th century can they be considered as the only and real inhabitants of the Danube valley, with organized settlements and material culture developed to a certain extent. This slow adaptation of the Slavs to the environment was largely the result of the historic situation. From the time of their arrival, and for the following few centuries, they were out of reach of the Byzantine administration and military power (Ostrogorski 1959) and they used this period to adapt their mode of living to the new conditions and to find the best opportunities for cultural development.

The Serbian population in the 9th century, as in the case of all the other free Slavic tribes, most frequently lived in settlements near rivers, each separated from the other by so-called communal land that belonged to the community. With the exception of a few larger villages, they lived mostly in hamlets, which tended to be located near the main communications following the course of the Danube and connecting central Europe with the east. In the territory discussed here the important section of this route is from Belgrade in Serbia to Vidin in Bulgaria. Since the line of this medieval route incorporated the Roman road system along the line of the *limes*, the remains of Slavic settlements are most frequently found within destroyed early Byzantine fortifications or underneath their collapsed walls.

In the great bend of the Danube immediately after the Iron Gate gorge, where archaeological investigations have been continuously conducted, many settlements dating from the 9th and 10th centuries are recorded. These are the

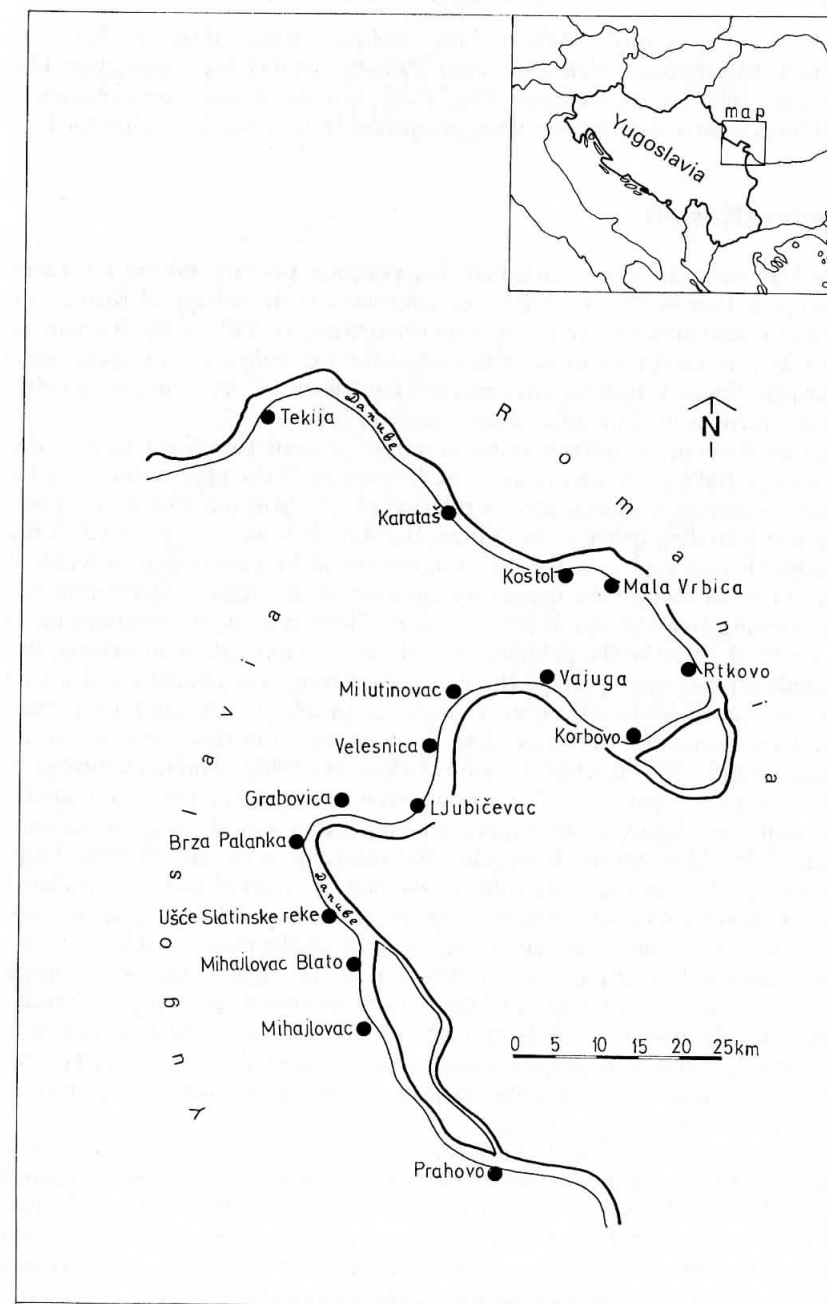


Figure 15.1 Settlements in the Danube basin south of the Iron Gate in the 9th and 10th centuries.



settlements at Kostol, Mala Vrbica, Velika Vrbica, Rtkovo, Korbovo, Vajuga, Milutinovac, Velesnica, Brza Palanka, Grabovica, Ljubičevac, Ušće Slatinske reke and Mihajlovac (Fig. 15.1). On all of these sites remains of buildings with a clear stratigraphy of cultural layers have been identified.

### Pontes (Kostol)

The best example of the settlement organization pattern and the subsistence strategy is Pontes, the site still being excavated in the village of Kostol. The medieval settlement is situated within the destroyed walls of the Roman and early Byzantine fortifications constructed for the military contingent which guarded Trajan's bridge, the magnificent work of the famous architect Apollodorus from Damascus (built between 103 and 105).

In the 1300 square metres so far investigated numerous features, including 33 houses, have been discovered. The houses are of the pit-dwelling type, of quadrangular (not always quite regular) plan. The postholes for roof supports and wattle in the earthen floor indicate the way they were constructed. A few, stronger beams were used for the roof, and the walls were of logs or wattle. In one corner of each of the houses was an oven of dry-stone construction with the opening towards the house entrance. Their system of construction and material (Roman *spolia*, pebbles, and whole or broken Roman bricks), their horseshoe plan, and especially the way the opening was flanked are characteristic of Slavic houses in a very wide geographical area and over many centuries. Generally, the houses had one oven each but there were some (e.g. houses 9 and 13) with two (Majanovic-Vujovic 1985). The houses from the 9th-century occupation level are of the one-room type and the stones forming the dome of the oven were unmortared so they could easily be removed (Fig. 15.2). The houses from the 10th-century level are slightly larger, consisting of two rooms, with the ovens built of stones plastered with clay. In these houses a screen separated the oven from the rest of the dwelling and rows of quite large stones were laid along the sides of the pit, probably to protect the straw roofs from the wind (Fig. 15.3). The small size of the houses ( $3.4 \times 3.5$ ,  $4.2\text{--}4.5 \times 4.5$  m) and their modest furnishings (sleeping benches, simple stools, and tables) indicate that they were mostly used as shelters from bad weather and as a sleeping place, with most of the daily activity being performed outside. This is confirmed by the discovery in the open spaces of many stone-built ovens, pits, tools, and other objects.

From the artefacts found, the complete subsistence system of the inhabitants can be defined and their different activities distinguished. Coulters, ploughshares, hoes, and sickles (Fig. 15.4) suggest that arable agriculture was the main activity which could be practised easily and successfully on the fertile soils along the banks of the big river. The many iron sickles and querns of micaceous stones stress the importance of cereals in the diet (Fig. 15.5).

The analysis of the faunal remains identified the bones of domesticated animals (cattle, horse, pig, sheep, goat, and poultry) and wild animals (deer,

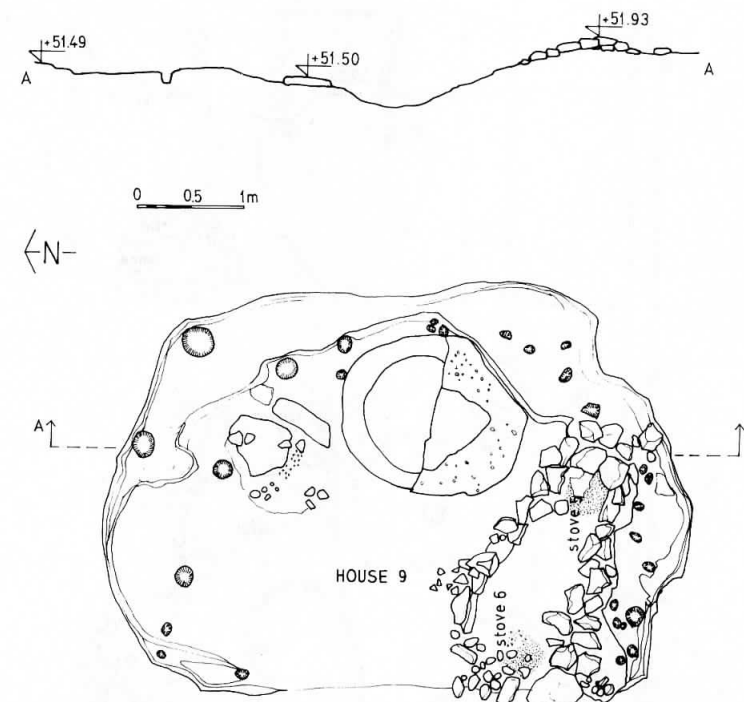
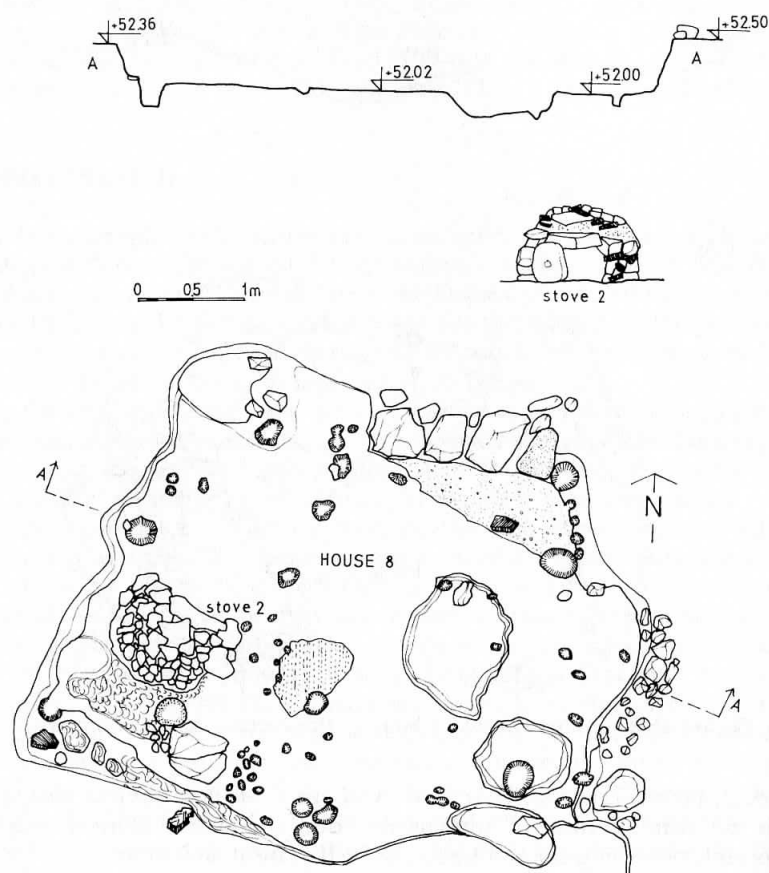


Figure 15.2 Pontes (Kostol) – house 9: 9th-century, single-room type.

roe deer, rabbit, chamois, boar, and even bear). So it is obvious that, apart from the domestication of animals for food and work, hunting was also important, providing fur and leather as well as meat and antler.

Pottery analysis showed the cooking pot as the predominant form, but there are also bowls, lids, lamps, and one- or two-handled jars (Fig. 15.6). Most of the pottery was locally produced on a slow wheel or some sort of turntable, as indicated not only by coils of clay pasted together and finger grooves but also by stamps on the bottoms of the vessels. The repetition of the same stamps on pots found in different houses and in various parts of the settlement indicates that the production of pottery was organized in workshops where potters used such stamps to mark their products. Towards the end of the 10th century jugs, amphorae, and similar vessels appeared, in which oil, wine, and grain products were imported from the eastern Byzantine provinces.

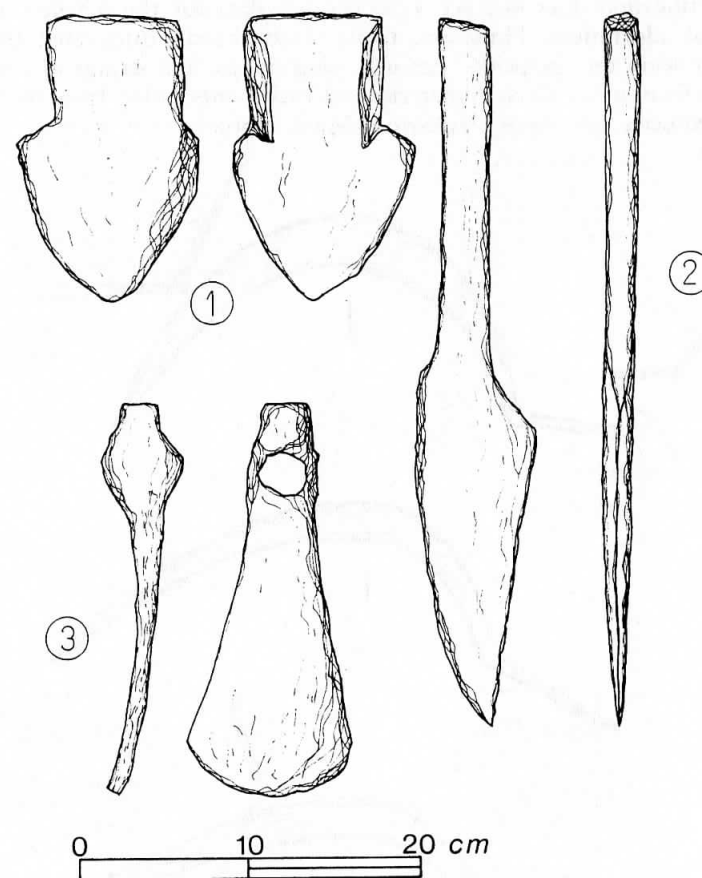
Many spindle whorls of different shapes and sizes (Fig. 15.7) are evidence for the preparation of yarn for weaving and knitting, and small ceramic loom weights and bone tools represent weaving equipment. The iron scrapers and bone polishers as well as the bone awls and needles suggest leather processing for shoes and clothes, while hooks, weights (for fishing nets), and the bones



**Figure 15.3** Pontes (Kostol) – house 8: 10th-century, double-room type.

and scales of fish show that fishing was widely practised. All this clearly suggests that alongside the main activities, such as arable agriculture, cattle breeding, pottery manufacture and handicrafts, supplementary activities like hunting and fishing played a significant role in the subsistence strategy of the 9th- and 10th-century inhabitants of the settlements in the Danube valley.

The objects made of antler and bone, such as numerous awls, tool-handles, polishers, and combs (Fig. 15.8), were probably produced not only for local needs but, together with wheat, leather, and meat, also as objects of trade to be exchanged for other necessities or raw materials. Of the bone objects the most interesting are the astragali of different animals (cattle, sheep, and deer) which bear inscriptions. These engravings are identical to the inscriptions found on the amphorae used as containers for different imported products and it suggests that they were used as tallies for trade. But it is also possible that some



**Figure 15.4** Pontes (Kostol) – ironwork: 1 ploughshare, 2 coulter, 3 hoe.

of them were part of the very simple calendar known to the inhabitants of this settlement and also in a much wider region populated by the Slavs, since very similar inscriptions are discovered on astragali found in Romania, Bulgaria, and other Slavic countries.

The people of this region were skilled carpenters as wood was the main building material. Many carpentry tools (Fig. 15.9) such as axes, adzes, diggers, chisels, and drills (Marjanovic-Vujovic 1988) were necessary, not only for building new houses but also for maintaining those already constructed, because the wood and clay needed constant attention, due to extreme climatic conditions with high humidity and very strong winds as well as the change from hot summers to severe, snowy winters.

The small amount of jewellery discovered (a few fingerings, bracelets, and trinkets) from the small number of graves investigated in the cemetery outside

the fortification does not yet yield enough data for the detailed study of personal adornment. However, from those already discovered the most popular were the 'grapeliike' earrings, fingerrings, and strings of beads also known from other Slavic cemeteries and settlements dating from the 9th and 10th centuries (Ercegovic-Pavlovic & Minic 1986).

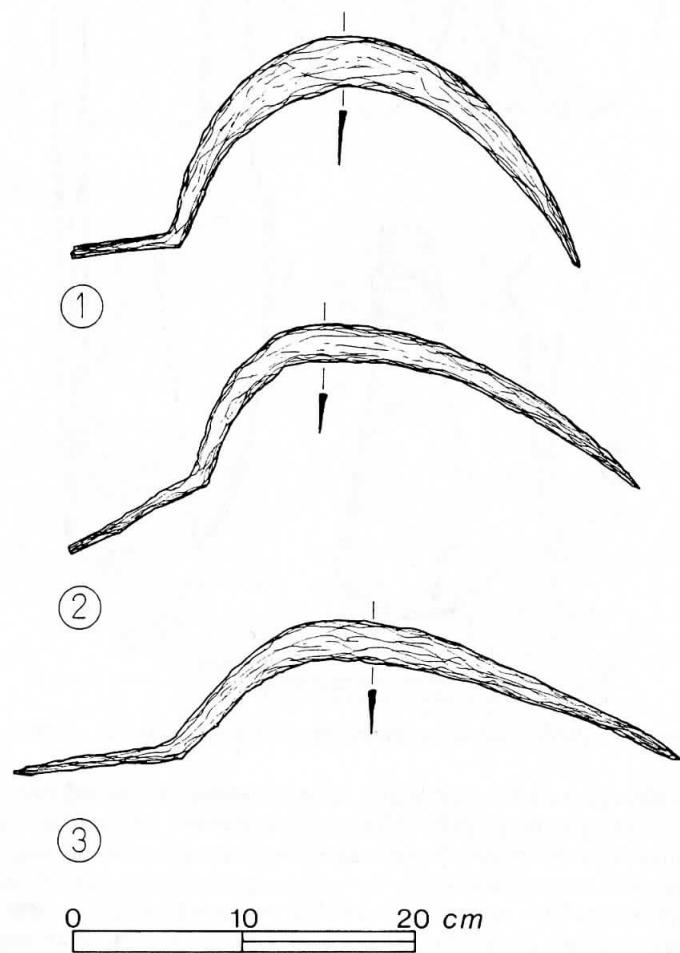


Figure 15.5 Pontes (Kostol) – ironwork: sickles.

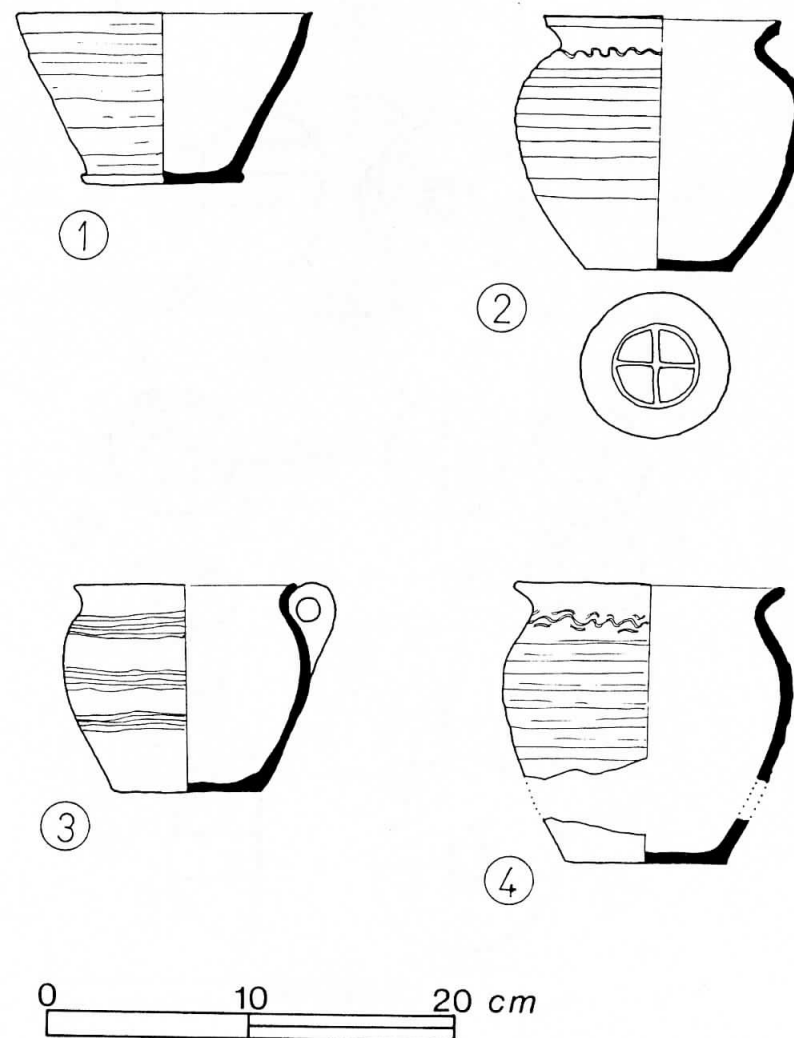
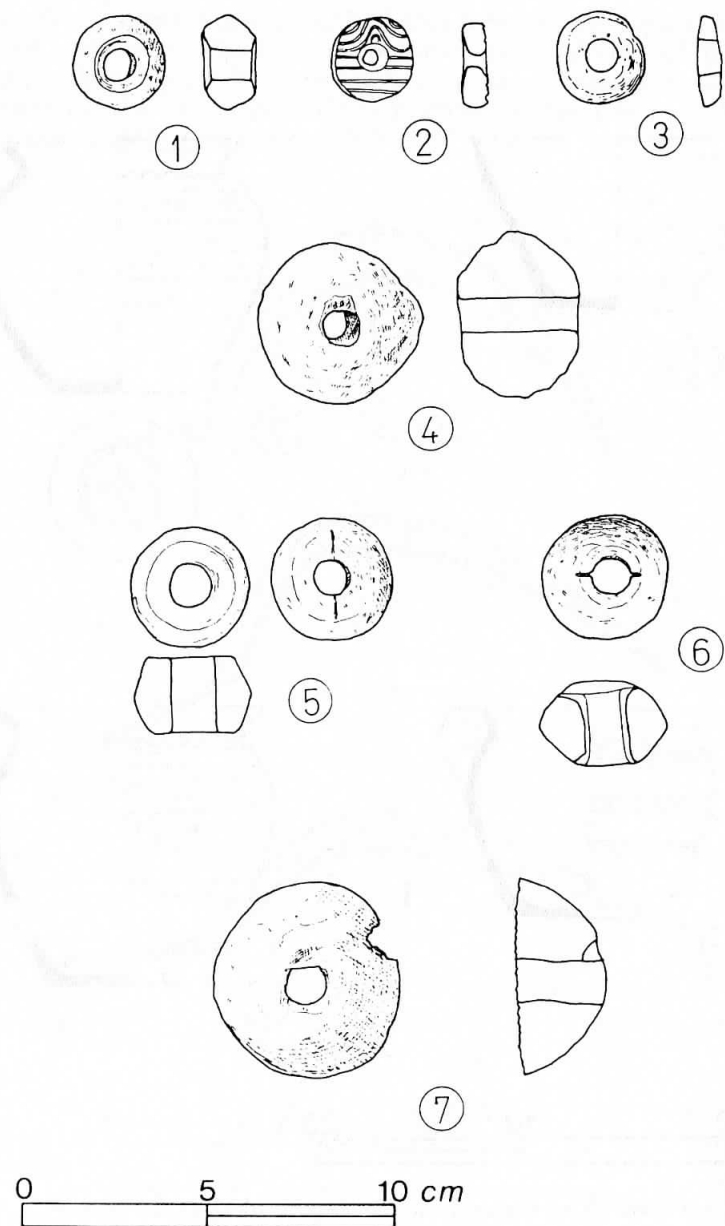
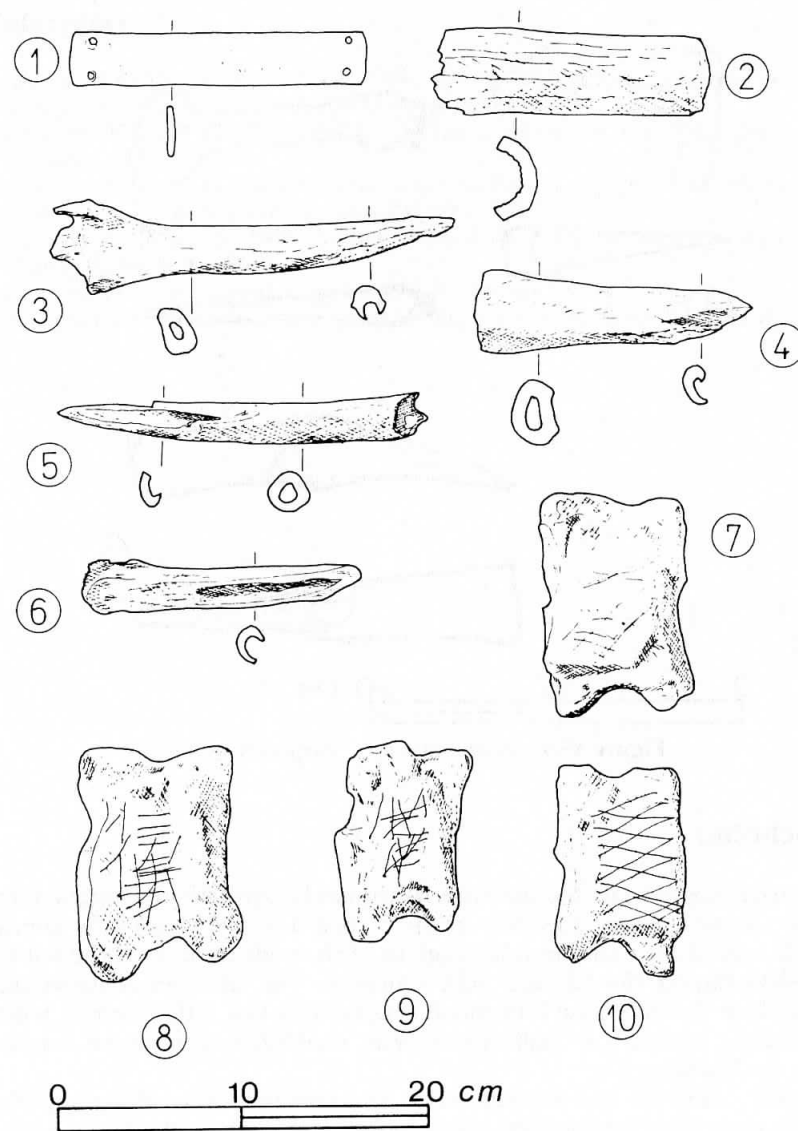


Figure 15.6 Pontes (Kostol) – pottery: 9th–10th centuries.





**Figure 15.7** Pontes (Kostol) – spindle whorls.



**Figure 15.8** Pontes (Kostol) – antler and bone objects: 1 comb, 2 tool handle, 3-6 awls, 7-10 astragali.

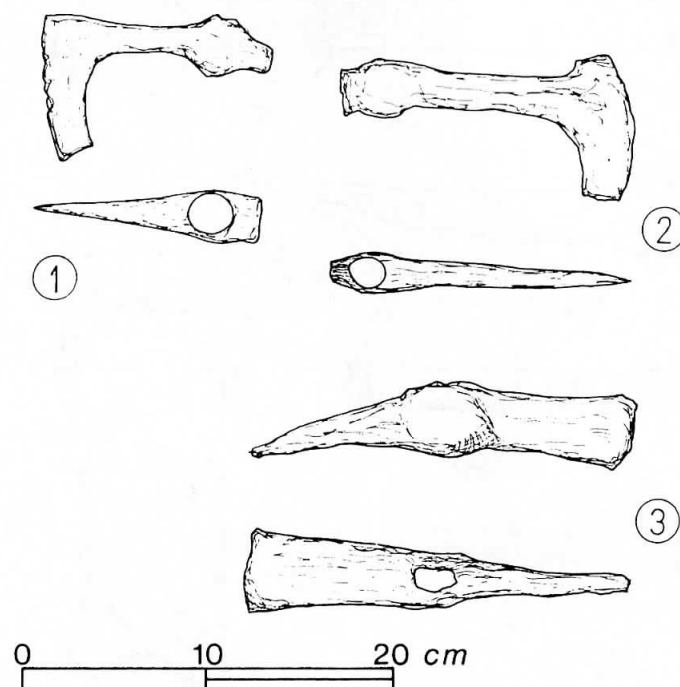


Figure 15.9 Pontes (Kostol) – carpentry tools.

## Conclusion

The archaeological data and the material acquired during the investigations on this site as well as on other sites in the Serbian Danube valley tally almost exactly with those found in other regions of the wide territory inhabited by the Slavs during the 9th and 10th centuries. The situation changed significantly at the end of the 10th and during the 11th and 12th centuries, when Byzantium, regaining its Balkan territories, established its northern frontier along the Danube.

Finally, there is one further point to emphasize after discussing the organization of settlements and the subsistence strategy of the Slavic population in the Danube valley in Serbia, during the 9th and 10th centuries. That is that very similar, almost identical, phases of development have been identified for many other non-Slavic populations in Europe at a time when the dawn of feudalism introduced an entirely new system in the history of human societies.

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# URBAN DEVELOPMENT

# 16 *Origins and development of Slavic and German Lübeck*

GÜNTER P. FEHRING

(translated by Katharine Judelson)\*

## **Introduction**

The subject of this study is the Slav stronghold and royal residence of Liubice—Old Lübeck and the German city of Lübeck. They lie in the area of the ethnic overlap of Slavs and Germans and represent very different stages of urban development in northern Europe, determined by different historical traditions. New excavations have shed further light on these matters, but have also raised other questions.

The northeast part of the Federal Republic of Germany is known to have been settled by Slavic tribes after the folk migration. In the innermost corner of Lübeck Bay, the Lübeck basin, the settlement areas of three subtribes of the Obotrites were to be found side by side: that of the Wagria in the north, that of the Polabes in the south, and that of the Obotrites, in the strict sense of the word, in the east. Contrary to what was assumed previously, the area where the three tribes settled turned out to have a concentration of fortified castles in the early Slavic period (8th–early 9th centuries). In accordance with the findings made by Wolfgang Fritze and Karl Struve, the centres of the pockets of settlement date most probably from the time of colonization (Fig. 16.1). Two of them, Bucu and Old Lübeck, had a special role to play due to their geographical position on important traffic routes: Bucu, on the land approach to the Lübeck city hill, dominated both the long-distance trade route coming from the south, which may well have existed for some time, and the sea route along the Trave (Fehring 1984a, 1988b). The Old Lübeck stronghold, which according to dendrochronology was erected in 819, lay at the crossroads of the long-distance trade and shipping routes and was already by that stage a trading centre, as shown by imports dating from the Carolingian period. Its construction, however, seems to have been the result of the need to strengthen the military defences of the Slavic settlement area against the Franks, after the change in the balance of political power in 817.

After a decline in the importance of these strongholds in the 9th and the 10th centuries there followed a return to political significance for the Dreistammeseck (Three tribes corner) in the late Slav period (11th and 12th centuries), when this area developed constitutionally into a large state

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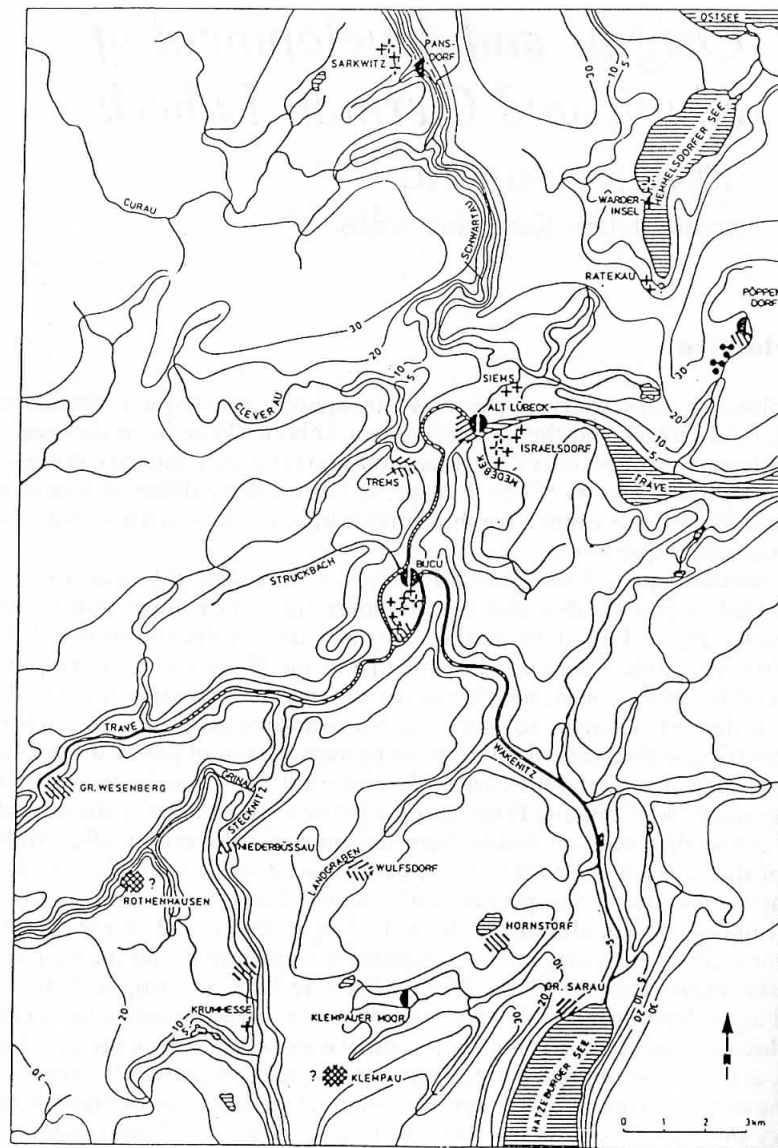
incorporating all three tribes. The new extension of Old Lübeck by the Obotrite dynasty of the Nakonids and the extension of Bucu by Cruto, the hostile Wagrian prince, should be interpreted in the light of this changed situation.

### Liubice, Old (Alt) Lübeck (9th–11th centuries)

The fortified settlement, situated 6 kilometres down the Trave from Lübeck on a spit of land where the Schwartau river flows into the Trave, clearly played an important role in long-distance trade from as early as 819, or shortly after, judging by the finds of imported articles dating to the early Slav phase. In the late Slav phase of the 11th century the character of this settlement is especially easy to reconstruct, since evidence from archaeological and written sources can be linked. A large-scale extension of the early Slavic fortifications with massive timber works took place as early as c. 1058, according to dendrochronological evidence – that is, during the reign of the Obotrite prince Gottschalk (1043–66). With regard to the function of such timber fortifications, reference should be made to the reconstruction of the late Slav stronghold at Behren-Lübchin in Mecklenburg by Ewald Schuldt.

Even at that time Old Lübeck was already operating as a central place: the first mention of Old Lübeck by Adam von Bremen, lists it among those fortified sites (*urbes* or *civitates*) which, at the time of Prince Gottschalk, boasted a monastery or convent. In 1988 the church of this monastery was excavated by H. H. Andersen. From their form, the stave-built constructions have been interpreted as large halls. This building technique, which is not really typical of the Slavs, is also found in the centres of maritime trade on the southern shores of the Baltic. In Old Lübeck it reflects the good relations between the local royal house and both its German neighbours and the royal house of Denmark, as recorded by the chronicler Helmold von Bosau. Even if Old Lübeck was not the prince's permanent residence, in Gottschalk's time it must already have been carrying out important functions as a regional centre. After an interlude when the stronghold was ruled by the Wagrian Cruto (1066–93), there followed another extension of Old Lübeck by Gottschalk's son, King Henry (1093–1127), as the prince's permanent residence and home for his family. King Henry had extended the fortifications yet again by c. 1087 and erected a stone church in the middle of the castle. It served among other things as a court chapel and royal burial place. This is borne out by the fact that the bodies were buried with gold browrings and fingerings of both Slavic and West European origin and also by a recently discovered gem of the Alsen type.

Clues as to the location of the princely residence mentioned in the Helmold Chronicle are provided by a concentration of artefacts found to the west of this church; clues as to the site of the military garrison under the supervision of the *princeps militiae* and the *prefectus urbis* are provided by arms, horseshoes, and spurs. Moulds from within the fortified residence point to the presence of



Slav fort/settlement (●) Early, middle, late. (◐) Early, middle. (◑) Late.

Slav settlement (▨) Early, middle, late. (▧) Early, middle. (▩) Late.

Isolated Slav finds (⊥) Early, middle. (+) Late. (●) Grave.

Figure 16.1 The Lübeck basin in the Slav period.

specialized craftsmen working in precious metals, as does the mint that was opened by Gerhard Hatz. In the *suburbium* of the castle, clustered close together in front of the gates, were buildings used by craftsmen, which had been built in the typically Slavic blockhouse style. Finds made there point to the presence of turners, leather-workers, comb-makers, basket-makers, stonemasons, and a blacksmith.

Of particular importance are the rows of bridge piles and the remains of late Slavic settlements along a reconstructed harbour inlet, which may well have been the documented port. They might have been connected with the merchants' settlement that grew up on the far side of the river with the support of King Henry. The location of the documented church which belonged to that site is revealed by the position of a grave found there. It is worth noting that the harbour was set back from the fortified settlement by the river, and also from the market and the merchants' settlement. There is also a documentary reference to the settlement having its own merchants' church. Both these points lead us to conclude, with Paul Johansen and Winfried Schich, that in parallel to the fortified settlement, with its strong organization, the merchants enjoyed, albeit under the ruler's protection and supervision, special rights and had their own organizations on the basis of guilds. Figure 16.2 shows the settlement area around the stronghold.

It has been established that late Slavic Old Lübeck under King Henry was the fortified settlement and royal residence of the great Obotrite state. The closely grouped buildings inside the fortification consisted of the court chapel, the royal residence, a mint, the quarters for the military garrison, and dwellings for highly specialized craftsmen. To the south, in front of the gate, was the *suburbium* with craftsmen's houses, and in the west the poorer people lived. Over the River Trave the goods were traded by the harbour bay, next to the merchants' settlement. Old Lübeck had Gottschalk and Henry to thank for its expansion; they wanted to create a Slavic state within the framework of a Christian and western culture. Their ultimate failure was due to disputes between the various groups of Slavs, and in 1138 Raze, a relative of Cruto, destroyed Old Lübeck.

It was under King Henry that Old Lübeck achieved its greatest political and economic importance; as late as 1141 it was still being referred to as *locus capitalis slavie*. It can be divided into three parts on the basis of topography and function: first, the prince's residence in the fortified stronghold, which was a military and administrative centre; second, the *suburbium*, with the craftsmen's settlement; and, third, the harbour area, where goods were exchanged and a settlement with its own church, belonging to the merchants, grew up. These three elements make up what can be called an early urban settlement, and to supply its need for agricultural produce further settlements grew up around Old Lübeck in increasing numbers, as finds in the area show (Fehring 1984b, 1988a, 1988b, Fehring & Hammel, 1985).

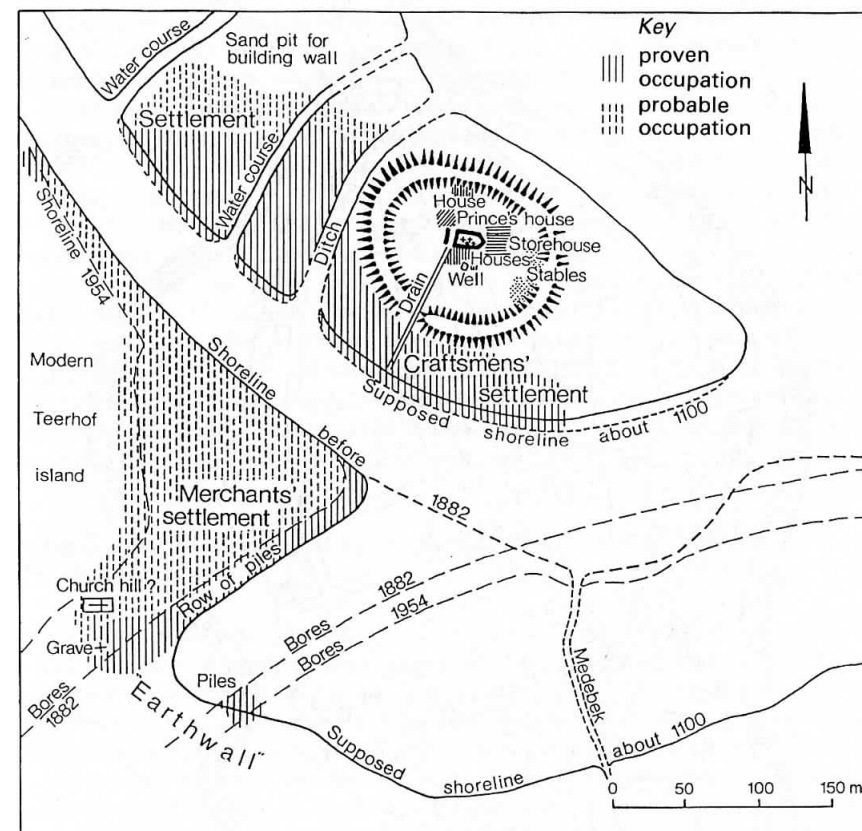
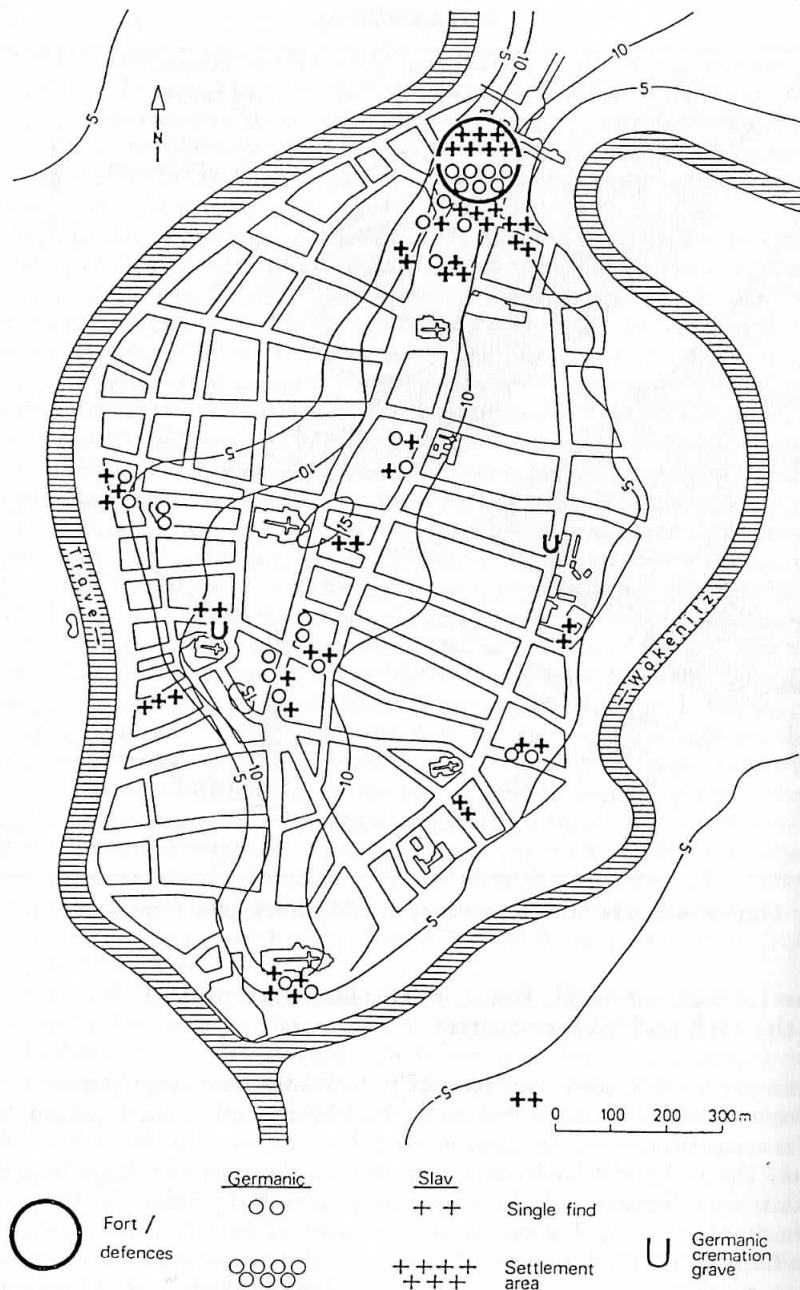


Figure 16.2 Historical topography of Old Lübeck (after Fehring 1984a).

### The Lübeck city hill, Bucu, in the late Slav period of the 11th and 12th centuries

While the Lübeck basin was regaining its former political importance, the older stronghold, Bucu, located on the land-bridge and probably dating back as far as the 8th century, was now extended once again (Fig. 16.3). According to the chronicler Helmold von Bosau, this was done by the Wagrian prince Cruto, who disputed political power bitterly with the Nakonids from Old Lübeck. Here we find a late Slavic extension of an older circular ditched fortification, which dominated the shipping and long-distance trade routes. Next to the settlement of the stronghold itself there was an extended *suburbium*. To the south of the city hill, around the cathedral, numerous finds point to a settlement dating from the Middle to late Slavic period (9th–10th to 11th–12th centuries), and what was probably a late Slavic cultivation layer



**Figure 16.3** Archaeological find-spots from the inner city, Lübeck: the Germanic settlement of the Roman period and from the Slav settlement (for reconstruction of the river courses, see Fehring & Hammel 1985).

was found on the slope. The oldest deposits, which suggest a settlement on the spur of the hill looking west towards the Trave, where a firm bank made the terrain suitable for use as harbour, also date from that period.

In addition numerous pieces of building timber, reused mainly in the 13th century, were found in various parts of the town, in particular those near the Trave river. Dendrochronology establishes that they had been used for building, some precisely in the year 1095 and others in the period c. 1097 up to or shortly after 1109. They point to a wide-scale extension of the settlement on the city hill during the reign of King Henry.

It should be noted that the Lübeck city hill, Bucu, in the 11th and more particularly in the 12th centuries, was far from being an unsettled wooded area. It was, on the contrary, likely to have been a cultivated landscape, characterized by a fortified stronghold on the north, by areas of settlement on the cathedral hill to the south, and by a well-sited harbour area to the west, on an important long-distance trade route and with land given over to arable farming (Fehring 1988b, Fehring & Hammel 1985).

### The links between Old Lübeck and the city hill, Bucu (12th century)

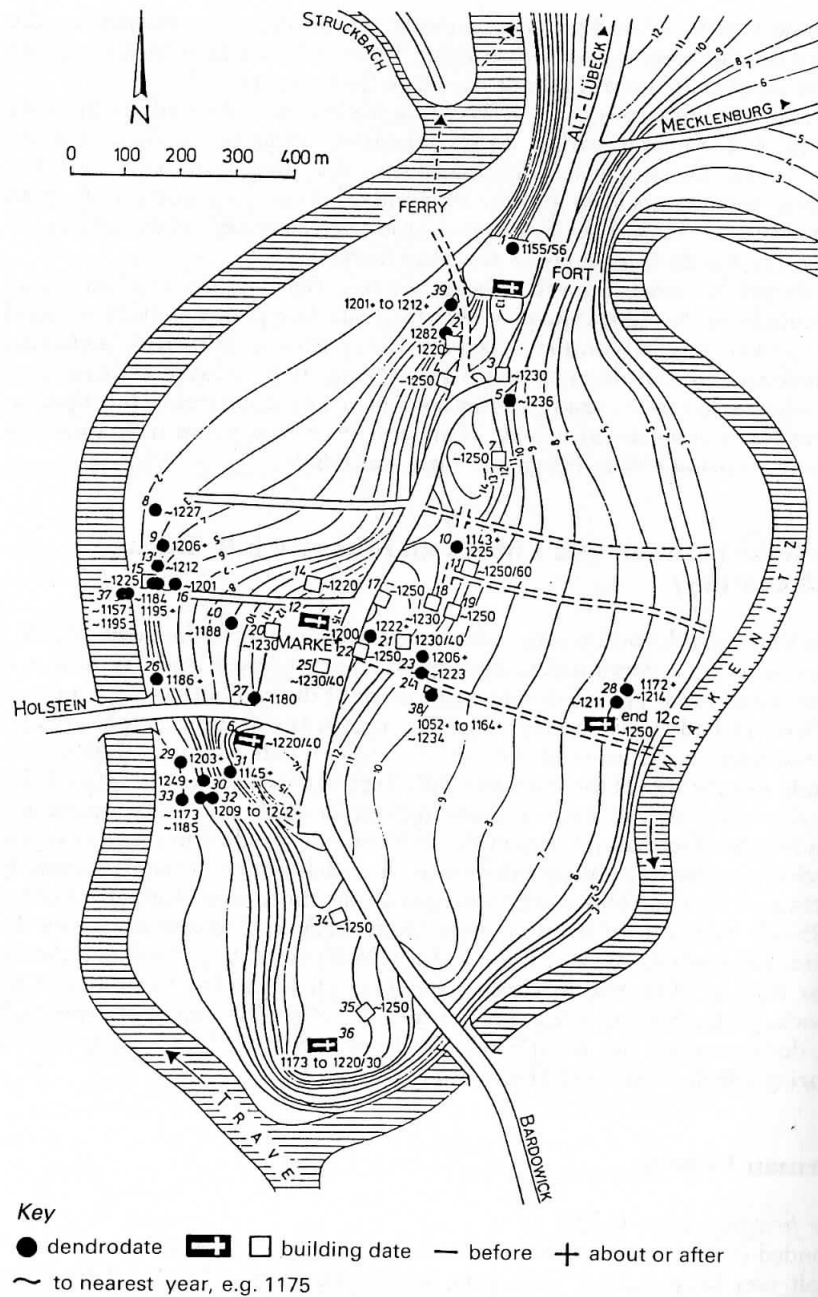
Since Old Lübeck had been the royal residence, even after the death of King Henry in 1127, it continued to have political power over Bucu, until it was destroyed in 1138. The economic importance of the early urban settlement at Old Lübeck had always been greater than that at Bucu; this is emphasized by the extension at this time in the use of the place name Liubice (Lübeck) to include also the area of the Bucu city hill. Yet political uncertainties after 1127, and the raids on Old Lübeck from the sea in 1128 and 1138, before the founding of a German settlement in 1143, caused a gradual movement of the merchants to the city hill, and there was a parallel shift of the city's economic functions there too. This was encouraged all the more when Emperor Lothar (1125–37) went out of his way to promote trade vigorously out across the Baltic. The harbour of New Lübeck, for which evidence can be found dating as far back as 1143, was in effect better protected than the harbour of Old Lübeck, partly because it was further inland and partly because its approach was dominated by the Bucu fortification, situated on a high vantage point (Fehring 1988b, Fehring & Hammel 1985).

### German Lübeck

#### *The first founding (1143)*

Founded in the course of the German moves eastwards in 1143, led by Count Adolf von Schauenburg, and again during moves in 1158–9, led by Duke Henry the Lion, Lübeck was considered to be the first city of the new west European type on the Baltic coast. As such it was the prototype for the





modern western city of the 12th century and was a model for the whole Baltic area, providing a centre for subsequent settlement and expansion. It was a new type of port settlement.

As described earlier, and contrary to previous assumptions, German Lübeck is in no way an example of an original settlement on a hitherto uninhabited peninsula. A question does arise, however, as to whether there was a gap between the Slavic and the German settlements, or whether the so-called German founding was a continuation of the previous settlements. Although late Slavic wooden structures have not yet been discovered *in situ*, the existence of reused timbers, mentioned above, which had been first used for building in 1095 and shortly afterwards, lends weight to the idea that settlement was uninterrupted (Fig. 16.4). These timbers and the structures for which they were used clearly lasted beyond the first decades of the German city by a considerable margin, since their secondary use occurred in most instances in the early 13th century.

We can now turn our attention to the topography of 1143. The position of the ruler's castle on the isthmus to the north, on the site of Cruto's ruined stronghold, had already been recorded by the chronicler Helmold von Bosau. After the Battle of Bornhöved in 1227 the castle was replaced by the fortified monastery of the Dominicans.

In the refectory and chapterhouse of the later monastery excavations have made it possible to establish the arrangement of the internal construction of the castle: among other things were parts of a small wooden building and a well, 105 metres deep, lined with wooden boards. The oaks which provided timber for the well had, according to dendrodating, been felled in the winter

← **Figure 16.4** Contour plan of the inner city, Lübeck, based on modern relief, together with all data from dendrochronology and building history for the topography from 1143 to the mid-13th century (after Fehring & Hammel 1985 with additions). 1 Burg Dd. 1155/56, 2 Kleine Burgstrasse (Cranen Konvent) B 1220, Dd. 1282, 3 Grosse Burgstrasse 48 B ~ 1230, 4 Koberg 2 B ~ 1250, 5 Grosse Gröpelgrube (Heiligen-Geist-Hospital), Dd. ~ 1236, 6 St. Petri B ~ 1220/40, 7 Königstrasse 9 ~ 1250, 8 Beckergrube 95 Dd. ~ 1227, 9 Mengstrasse 64 Dd. 1206 +, 10 Königstrasse 34 Dd. 1143 +, Dd. 1225, 11 Königstrasse 31 B ~ 1250/60, 12 St Marien B ~ 1200, 13 An der Untertrave 97 Dd. ~ 1212, 14 Mengstrasse 16 B ~ 1220, 15 Alfstrasse 38 Dd. ~ 1184, Dd. 1195 +, B ~ 1225, 16 Alfstrasse 36 Dd. ~ 1201, 17 Breite Strasse 55 B ~ 1250, 18 Johannistrasse 13 (Dr-Julius-Leber-Str. 13) B ~ 1230, 19 Königstrasse 41 B ~ 1250, 20 Schlüsselbuden 10 B ~ 1230, 21 Schranken B 1230/40, Dd. 1222 +, 22 Breite Strasse 71 B ~ 1250, 23 Königstrasse 59 Dd. 1206 +, 24 Fleischhauerstrasse 25 Dd. ~ 1223, 25 Rathaus B ~ 1230/40, 26 An der Untertrave 110-111 Dd. 1186 +, 27 Holstenstrasse 6 Dd. ~ 1180, 28 Johanniskloster Dd. 1172 +, Dd. ~ 1211, Dd. ~ 1214, B 12 cent. ~ 1250, 29 Kleine Petersgrube 18 Dd. 1203 +, 30 Grosse Petersgrube 8a Dd. 1249 +, 31 Grosse Petersgrube 11 Dd. 1145 +, 32 Grosse Petersgrube 17-25 Dd. 1209 to 1242 +, 33 Grosse Petersgrube 27 Dd. ~ 1185, 34 Kapitelstrasse 5 B ~ 1250, 35 Bischofshof B ~ 1250, 36 Dom B 1173 to 1220/30, 37 An der Untertrave/Kaimauer Dd. ~ 1157, 38 Alfstrasse 38, Dd. 1052 + bis 1164 +, ~ 1234, 39 Kleine Altefähre 15 Dd. 1201 + to 1212 +, 40 Fischstrasse 10, Dd. ~ 1188.



of 1155–6. The historical backcloth for the construction of this well was clearly the conflict at that time between Adolf von Schauenburg and Duke Henry the Lion. The well was exactly in the middle of the circular Slavic defences, which had, therefore, clearly been retained and then renovated, specifically as part of the German castle. Thus the arrangement and building methods, combining timber and earth, used for the ruler's castle in Lübeck in the mid-12th century, were modelled on what were undeniably old-fashioned building practices.

The function of the castle was, as in the case of the earlier Slavic stronghold, not only domination of the long-distance trade and shipping routes but also the military, economic, and administrative opening up of the region, as well as the protection of the now blossoming areas of settlement on the peninsula between the Wakenitz and Trave rivers.

With regard to the location of the merchants' settlements of the first city founded by the Germans, there are divergent, mutually exclusive, historical hypotheses. Archaeologists, however, have been coming increasingly close to locating it, since topographical details, the results of drilling, records of a port, as well as archaeological finds, all point to the fact that the harbour spur faced west. In this place new settlement activity, recognizable thanks to dendrodated buildings, is to be found above the traces of late Slavic settlements. Here we are inclined to hypothesize that there was a harbour settlement of the merchants, since a shore defence dendrodated at 'c. 1157' has been recently identified (Schalies, in preparation) and numerous finds of a functional nature point to the existence of a port market (Ellmers, in press). Overlying wooden constructions, not belonging to the earliest period of settlement, are dated from 1175 to 'c. 1188' (Dumitrache *et al.* 1987). The late Slavic settlement in the area of the cathedral hill and the ford across the Wakenitz could also have continued in existence.

It has been established, in connection with the first founding of the German city in 1143, that this cannot in any way be regarded as an abrupt start to settlement on a previously uninhabited peninsula. The Count's fort to the north clearly constitutes an extension of its Slavic forerunner and it is noteworthy that the *suburbium* did not develop further. The far more probable siting of the merchants' harbour settlement, considerably further away in the west, is indicated by the nature of the land spur, by references to a port, by the functional nature of finds that could well relate to a port market, and also by the recently identified coastal defence, although the dating of this at c. 1157 admittedly offers no exclusive proof to link it to the original founding of the German city. The late Slavic settlement in the area of the cathedral hill and the ford across the Wakenitz might also have continued. Overall, the continued existence of extensive buildings from the late Slavic into the early German period seems well founded, given the reuse of timbers dating from 1095 and soon afterwards. It therefore follows that the structure of the settlement of this first German city (founded in 1143 and consisting of several sections) at the crossroads of the older long-distance trade and shipping routes, clearly represented a continuation and reworking of the Slavic settlement that had

been there previously. It is most likely to have been a relatively independent trading settlement for merchants organized in companies under the protection of the city's ruler, and thus was a preliminary step to the fully developed town (Fehring 1988b, Fehring & Hammel 1985).

### *On the new founding of Lübeck (1159–1181)*

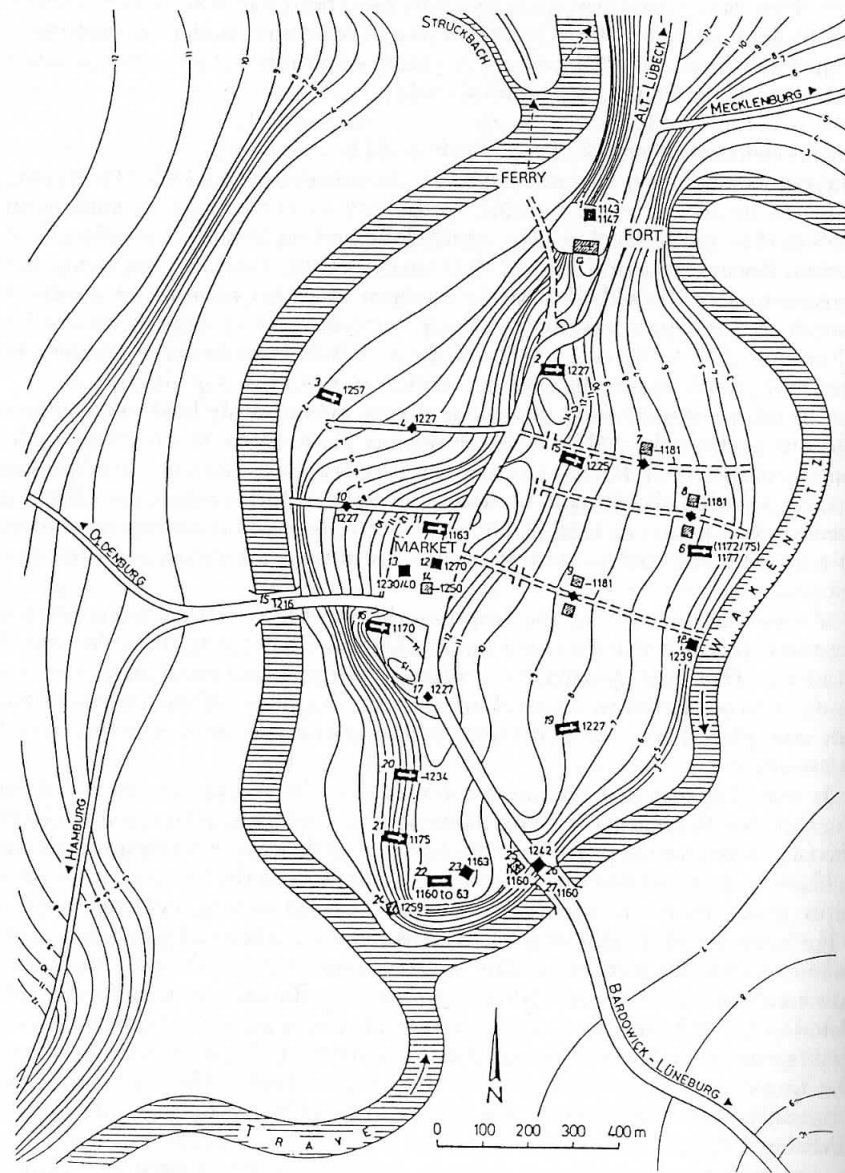
The conflict between Count Adolf von Schauenburg and Duke Henry the Lion led finally, after the burning of the city in 1157, to its refounding in 1158–9. The rapid development which followed on from this is reflected in various documentary references: the transfer of the bishopric, involving the construction of the cathedral in the south in 1160; the mention of a market church in 1163 (not absolutely clearly located); and records of St Peter's Church in the southwest in 1170, of the St John's Benedictine monastery in the east in 1177, and of the town's fortifications in 1181 (Fig. 16.5).

The centre of the system of regular streets, unanimously held to have been laid out no later than 1158–9, is the market place. In his work entitled *The Lübeck market*, Fritz Rörig, redated the property relationships linked to the market, which had originally been thought to be of 13th-century date, back to the founding period of 1158–9. He went on to expound his controversial ideas of a founder consortium with its own constitution as forerunner of the city council.

Various excavations in the neighbourhood of the market have, on the contrary, revealed that there is a total lack of material dating from the period 1159–81. This is supported by verified dendrochronological dates for the finds. It therefore follows quite clearly that the beginning of the settlement did not take place here, and that intensive use of the market area is out of the question.

It would appear that the discussion unleashed by Rörig blinded people to the fact that the market for international trade, which was the vital nerve of the city, was near the port. That is where the settlement of foreign merchants is likely to have grown up; the market on the top of the hill was at no time more than a local one. On the basis of these considerations, evidence for this stage in the development of the town has so far been found by archaeologists mainly within the port areas. This applies in particular to the port market of the merchants in the west (Ellmers, in press), with its coastal embankments dated to 'c. 1157' (Schalies, in preparation). It also applies to a house in Grosse Petersgrube that has been dendrodated at 'around 1173', and to timber from the Lower Trave, which had been reused after 1186 – this had, however, originally been used in the period 'c. or after 1156' up to 'c. or after 1170' (Fehring 1984a; Fehring 1988b).

The following hypothesis emerges: linked to earlier routeways, various parts of the settlement complex of the Schauenburg period remained intact after the city fire of 1157 and the new city founded by Duke Henry the Lion represents no more than an extension and a further stage of development for the market settlement of the early town. The fortification in the north was retained, and new elements were the Bishop's Palace to the south, St Peter's



## Key

- date from written source    ▨ not precisely located    ◆ for streets  
 ⊕ for sacred buildings    — before    + about or after  
 ~ to the nearest year, e.g. 1175.

Church in the west and St John's monastery in the east. In the harbour in the west dendrochronology has established that the shore defence dated from c. 1157. The market church, the market itself, and the *civitas* have not been precisely located. The rights that were granted to the *civitas*, and only indirectly handed down, make it possible to identify Lübeck from this stage in its development onwards as a city in the legal sense of the word (Fehring 1988b; Fehring & Hammel 1985).

*From the reign of King Frederick I until the achievement of the city's freedom (1181–1226)*

The third imperial and then royal or Danish stage in the development of the city led to a more pronounced degree of self-rule, with the first mention of the city council in 1201, and also to a topographical expansion both inside and outside. An important precondition for this was the extension of the city's right to cover both the bishop's land on the south and the floodlands of the Trave valley in the west, which was granted in 1188.

As to internal expansion, a layer of burning in the market place, as well as a drain on the Schranken, point to a more intensive use of these open spaces for trading purposes than could be deduced from the finds made there dating to the end of the 12th and beginning of the 13th centuries. This links in with the first mention of the council in 1201 and of the town hall in 1230–40, and also with the oldest part of the council and market church, dedicated to St Mary at the end of the 12th century or around the year 1200. The dendrodating of frame-built wooden structures at 1180 to 'c. 1188' near the top of Fischstrasse (Dumitrache *et al.* 1987) and also numerous finds point to the settlement of all areas where the ground was suitable for building in the late 12th and the early 13th centuries.

The founding of the Holy Ghost Hospital in 1234 and that of the Franciscan St Katharine monastery in 1225, as well as the first mention of the St James and St Giles (Aegidius) parish churches (1227) also tie in with this. Archaeo-

← **Figure 16.5** Contour plan of the inner city, Lübeck, based on modern relief, together with all data obtained from written sources for the topography from 1143 to the mid-13th century (after Fehring & Hammel 1985). 1 Fort 1143, 1147; Dominican monastery 1229, 2 St Jacobus 1227, 3 St Clemens 1257, 4 Beckergrube 1227, 5 St Catherina 1225, 6 St John's monastery (1172/75) 1177, 7 Property of St John's monastery before 1181 (Glockengiesserstrasse indirectly inferred therefrom), 8 Property of St John's monastery before 1181 (Hundestrasse indirectly inferred therefrom), 9 Property of St John's monastery before 1181 (Fleischhauerstrasse indirectly inferred therefrom), 10 Alfstrasse 1227, 11 St Maria 1163 (as unlocated *forensis ecclesia*), 12 Town Hall 1270, 13 Oldest Town Hall 1230/40, 14 Market 1250, 15 Holsten bridge 1216, 16 St Peter 1170, 17 Klingenberg 1227, 18 City wall by the 'New Mill' on Hüxterdamm 1239, 19 St Aegidius 1227, 20 Oldest Holy Ghost Hospital before 1234, 21 St John's auf dem Sande 1175, 22 Cathedral 1160 to 1163, 23 Curtis of the Cathedral priory 1163, 24 City wall on the Trave 1259, 25 House of the priest Ethelo 1160 (locality indefinite), 26 Mill gate 1242, 27 Mill bridge 1160.

logical findings, however, point to a less compact series of buildings not yet involving continuous street fronts.

With external expansion, to the first half-timbered buildings near the Trave river, which had come into being 'around 1173', starting with Grosse Petersgrube 27, were added further small wooden-frame structures at the corner of Alfstrasse: the oldest of these was dendrodated to 'around 1184'. However, it was clearly only when the city's rights were extended to the floodlands of the Trave that large-scale measures to open up new building land in the marsh areas were undertaken as a community project, both to the north and south of the spur of hilly land pointing down to the Trave, and involving the introduction of extensive wooden piles. Dendrodates such as 'around or after 1186' (to the north of Holsten Strasse), 'around or after 1201' (in Grosse Petersgrube), and 'around 1127' (at Beckergrube 95) make it clear that, from at least the early 13th century, there was no more suitable building ground available on the city hill.

Let us turn now to the pattern of building and the street layout. The positions of the wooden buildings near the banks of the Trave river, originating in the period from around 1173 to around 1215, both in Grosse Petersgrube as well as in Alfstrasse, took no account of each other, nor the later parcelling of plots and street frontages. This could, at least in the area of Alfstrasse, arise from the fact that the shore market for merchants concerned with long-distance trade must have been situated here, outside the original city wall (Ellmers, in press). Such a conclusion is based on the functional nature of the finds. The wooden buildings on the slope of the hill, on the other hand (Dumitrache 1987), were clearly already incorporated into the general street layout. The same applies to the shore near the Trave river, from the erection of the first brick buildings onwards, which took place, according to the most recent dendrodating 'in around 1220' on the corner of Alfstrasse and the street known as 'An der Untertrave'. At that time, after the older shore market had been abandoned, the plan of construction and the street grid were extended down as far as the Trave river. The 'modern' invention of a relatively regular grid of streets, therefore, arranged at right angles to the main axis of the long-distance trade route, can have begun only gradually in this period. A street named after the Holsten Bridge in a document of 1216 points to the existence of this river-crossing by then, while Alfstrasse, Beckergrube, and the Klingenberg district have been shown to date from 1227.

We can now summarize the third stage in the development of Lübeck, between 1181 and 1226. The settlement complex, which up until then had consisted of various parts, was expanded internally through an increase in the concentration of settlement, and externally through new colonization, after an extension of the town's rights to land, which were granted in 1188 at the latest. The increased building is reflected in the emerging street network, which can be discerned by this stage, in the increase of the number of parish churches to five, and in the building of a monastery of a mendicant order, a hospital, and stone fortifications for the city. Through these Lübeck achieved a new stage of development which corresponded to the autonomy of the city council's constitution.

After the castle had been razed and the city had been accorded its freedom in 1226, the city hill – apart from the canons' courts – constituted a legally independent district within the empire, which through the extension of urban buildings around the market retained its constitutional and topographical centre (Fehring 1988b, Fehring & Hammel 1985).

## Conclusion

Old Lübeck of the late Slav period around 1100 and the German city of the 13th century represent the two poles of a span of development – that is, the quantitative and qualitative change from the early town as a centre for maritime trade to the comprehensively advanced stage of urban development.

From the quantitative point of view, the surface of the settled area increased from c. 55 hectares in Old Lübeck to at least 100 hectares on the Lübeck city hill. From the qualitative point of view, Old Lübeck is rightly reckoned among the leading cities of its time, for here was to be found a city divided up into three in accordance with its topographical and functional features: first, a princely residence in a fortified stronghold that constituted a political, military, and cultural centre; second, a *suburbium*, with a craftsmen's settlement; and, third, a port with a merchants' settlement. The position of the merchants' quarter, to one side of the town and over the river, clearly reflects the special constitutional position of the merchants, who were organized in their companies, as opposed to the fortified residence, where the population was directly dependent on the ruler.

For Lübeck, former ideas about the founding of a prototype for the modern western 12th-century town on the basis of a deliberate act of planning need to be revised. After the long-distance trade functions and the name had been shifted from the Old City on the city hill, Bucu, German Lübeck in the second half of the 12th century represents the extension of a Slavic settlement complex which had consisted of several parts (fortified settlement, large *suburbium*, long-distance trade route and port) and which had been in existence for hundreds of years. The first founding of a German city in 1143 is, therefore, not a new beginning. It is far more likely, as was the case for other German foundations in what had previously been areas of Slavic occupation, that a late Slavic settlement complex was expanded and reworked by German city founders to develop into a market settlement belonging to an early stage of urban development. The founding of a second German urban unit by Duke Henry the Lion in 1158–9 then made Lübeck a city in the legal sense of the word. In the third stage of its development, after 1181, the city achieved its autonomy within the empire, thanks to its political and economic expansion, and then in 1226 it became a free city. Hand in hand with this went the gradual spread of the settlement and the opening up of the various topographical features, so that by the end of the 13th century the city hill was almost completely built up. In the course of this development a new type of port settlement developed, more in line with modern conceptions of an urban area.



After the market on the bank of the Trave had been abandoned, the regular network of streets taking the market as its focal point could be set up by gradually laying them out at right angles to the older long-distance trade route.

The long and complicated development of pre- and proto-urban Slavic roots, by way of a German port and market settlement, to a fully fledged city clearly seems to have proceeded in stages, and this development was by no means the implementation of an official founding edict. In this, Lübeck is not an isolated case. So, previous ideas about the position of Lübeck in the development of urban settlements in the Baltic region need to be modified to a significant degree.

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# 17 Research in Prague – an historical and archaeological view of the development of Prague from the 9th century to the middle of the 14th century

VACLAV HUML

## Introduction

Prague is situated in a basin through which the River Vltava flows, forming a wide meander and leaving a depression to the north beside the rocky ridge of the Letná hill. Since earliest times, merchant caravans from the north, west, and east have easily crossed the wide and shallow stream, being able to choose between several different fords. The slightly undulating relief of the countryside, with numerous knolls and glacial terraces, cut by the transverse valleys of the Vltava's tributaries, has always provided favourable conditions for settlement.

The 1100 years of settlement during the historic period in the Prague basin (Boháč 1976, p. 53) have left a great number of early buildings and monuments still surviving in the streets of Prague, whose core has been designated a conservation area. The renovation, reconstruction, and regeneration of this historic centre, as well as architectural, historical, and archaeological research (Princ 1981, p. 241), have all been financially supported by the Czechoslovak government. The Municipal Museum of Prague and the Archaeological Institute of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences (ČSAV) have been responsible for the research programme under the central control of the Prague Archaeological Commission, which was established in 1969. To assist this work, all new building in the city is, by law, preceded by archaeological excavation, which must be financed by the builder, and since 1979 there has also been a Rescue Archaeology Group dealing with the development areas on the outskirts of Prague.

In this chapter I will be giving a brief summary of this work, concentrating in particular on results obtained by the Municipal Museum. I will, however, include the research conclusions of other archaeological bodies, especially the two major programmes of the ČSAV at Prague Castle (Smetánka *et al.* 1980, pp. 94–107, Smetánka 1982, Hrdlička *et al.* 1985) and Vyšehrad (Nechvátal



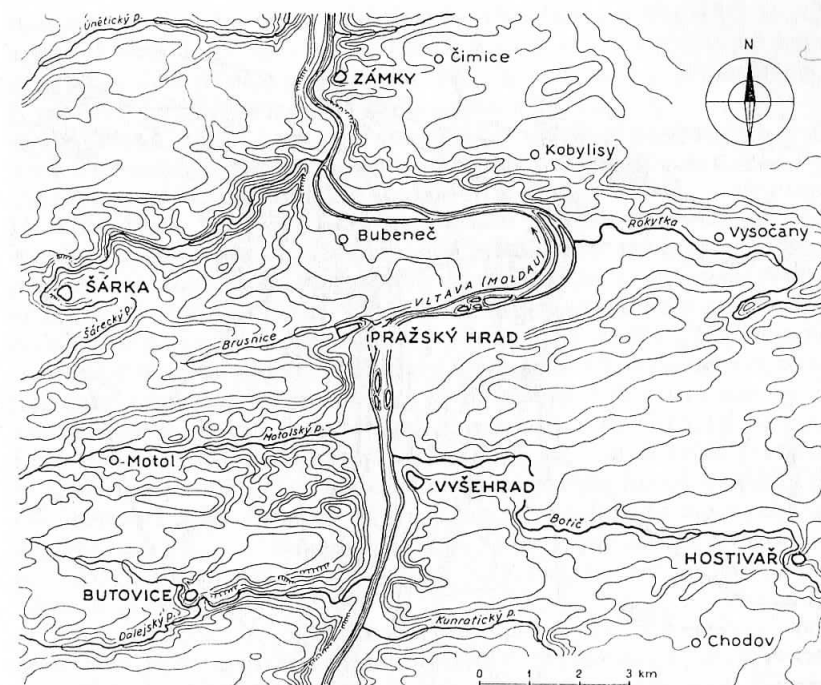
1974, 1983a, 1983b, Nechvátal & Kašička 1977, Kašička & Nechvátal 1979, 1985). In addition to this work, however, there is a large body of research on Prague's 1100 years of development, through historical geography (Boháč 1970), plan morphology (Libal & Píša 1958, and documentary history (Tomek 1855, 1866, Čelakovský 1885, Teige 1910–15, Fiala 1966, Janáček 1977, 1983, Třeštík 1980, 1981, 1983), as well as general archaeological syntheses (Vojtíšek 1930, 1953a, 1953b, Turek 1950, 1966, 1984, Čarek 1966, Ječný *et al.* 1984).

### Origins and early development of settlement foci (6th–11th centuries)

Evidence for settlement in Prague begins with sporadic finds of the 6th century onwards in the district (Hradčany) around the present area of Prague Castle (Pražský Hrad). These appear to be related to early Slavic settlements to the south and west of the later castle site, although continuous occupation can be demonstrated only in Hradčany from the 9th century (Frolík 1986, pp. 73, 81, Fig. 5, Čiháková 1984a). The true beginnings of Prague are, in fact, taken to be closely related to the establishment of Prague Castle, where the first documented activity was the construction of the church of the Virgin Mary by Prince Bořivoj at some time before 885 (Borkovský 1949, 1953, p. 129, Merhautová 1971, p. 213, 1983, p. 81, Klápště *et al.* 1983, p. 387, Klápště 1984). At this point the Přemysl dynasty, in the early stages of state formation in Bohemia, moved its centre to Prague, probably from the hillfort at Levý Hradec (Borkovský 1966, Sláma 1974, p. 46). From then on the importance of an early Slavic settlement focus to the north of Prague, at Dejvice, Bubeneč, and Podbaba, declined (Turek 1950, p. 90) and there was also a loss of status and power for the hillforts of Šárka, Butovice, and Zámky (Stará Zámka) on the periphery of the Prague basin (Fig. 17.1; Turek 1950, p. 64, 1966, pp. 130–32, Borkovský 1969, p. 40).

Related to the rise of Prague Castle are a number of cemeteries found in the immediate vicinity: Jelení Street (Fig. 17.2, 1; Borkovský 1947, p. 145); Loreta Square (Fig. 17.2, 2; Borkovský 1964, p. 32; Frolík 1986, pp. 73, 81, Fig. 5); by the Strahov (Sommer 1982); near the Royal Riding School (Fig. 17.2, 4; Borkovský 1951, p. 101); and in the Ball Ground (Fig. 17.2, 5). The earliest of these was at the Riding School to the north of the castle, where 145 skeletons were discovered during the excavations of 1972–4. The graves belonged to the Velká Morava type, from the Great Moravian period of the late 9th to 10th centuries, and they prove not only the presence of the prince's court at Prague Castle, but also a strong Great Moravian cultural influence on the community (Smetánka *et al.* 1973, p. 265, 1974, pp. 386, 387, Fig. 1).

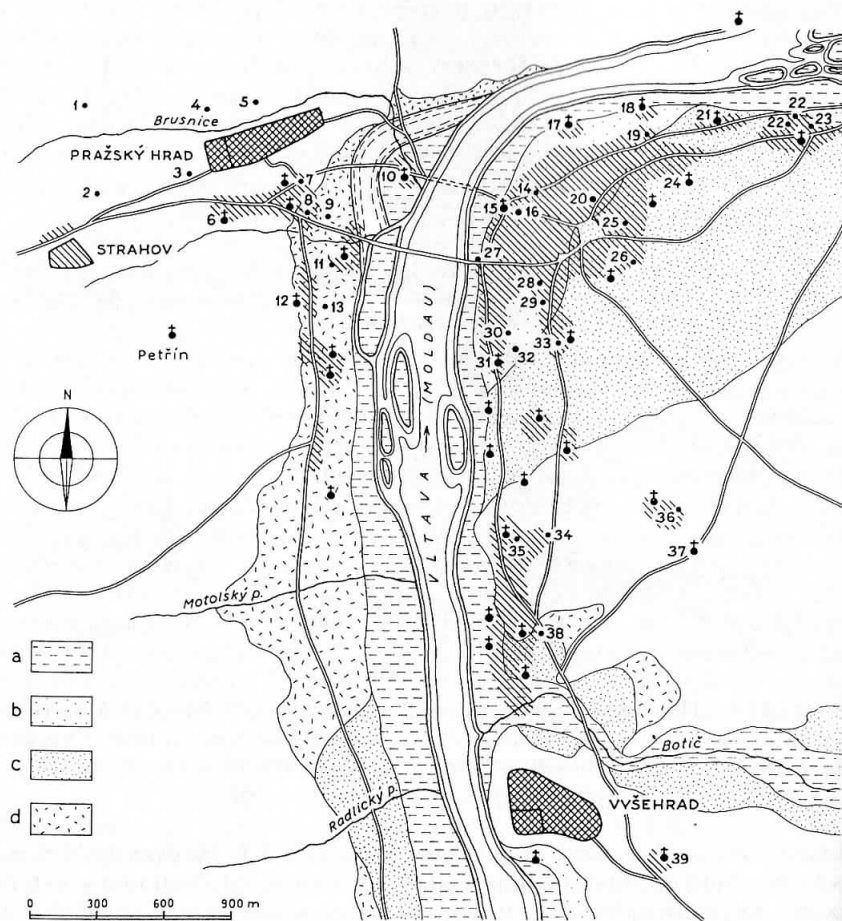
By the 10th century the southern part of the present area of Prague Castle was a fortified centre of the Přemysl princes. To the south of this lay the residence of the Bishops of Prague and the site of the first monastery of Benedictines, founded near the church of St George. This was beginning of the *suburbia*, an area where the craftsmen worked, according to the account of



**Figure 17.1** The Prague agglomeration: Butovice, Šárka, Vyšehrad, Zámky (Hostivař?). Slavic castle sites: Bubeneč, Čimice, Chodov, Kobyličky, Motol, Vysočany (early medieval settlements investigated by the Municipal Museum of Prague; drawing: Štěpán Novák).

Ibrahim ibn Jakub, a merchant from Cordoba, in 965–6. He described Prague as a town built of stone and lime, and, in the second redaction of his text, he located the marketplace next to the river, below the stronghold of Prague Castle (Kowalski 1946, Třeštík 1972, pp. 392–3). This is clearly the area of the *suburbia* and there was no mention at this stage of Vyšehrad.

The importance of this market is emphasized by the presence there of merchants and traders from Russia, Poland, and Hungary, as mentioned by Ibrahim, as well as from the Frankish empire, as recorded in the St Wenceslaus Legend (Ludvíkovský 1958, p. 56). At this time Prague seems also to have been one of the centres of the European slave trade, organized by Jewish merchants (Třeštík 1983, p. 13). This trade and industry close to the prince's court encouraged the growth of population and many traces of settlement have been found in this area below the walls of Prague Castle, dating from the beginning of the 10th to the middle of the 12th centuries. One example is in the modern Malostranské Square (Fig. 17.2, 8; Borkovský 1964, p. 49, 1969, p. 30, Fig. 31, Hrdlička 1983, p. 619, 1984a, 1984b, p. 651, Ječný *et al.* 1984), and there were associated cemeteries beside the important trading road



**Figure 17.2** The Prague agglomeration up to the middle of the 12th century (drawing: Štěpán Novák): 1 Jelení ul. (street), 2 Loretánské nám. (square), 3 Hradčanské nám. (square), 4 Jízdárna (Royal Riding School), 5 Míčovna (Ball Ground), 6 Jánký vršek (hill) with St John, 7 Sněmovní ul. (street) No. 177/III, 8 Malostranské nám. (square), 9 Josefská ul. (street) No. 626/III, 10 Klárov, 11 Maltézské nám. (square), 12 Hellichova ul. (street) No. 553/III (St Lawrence), 13 Hellichova ul. (street), 14 Široká ul. (street) No. 23/V – Pinkas synagogue, 15 Valentinská ul. and Kaprova ul. No. 56/I, 16 Kaprova ul. (street), 17 Sanitrova ul. (Monastery of Cyriacs), 18 Na Františku, 19 Haštalské nám. (square), 20 Dlouhá ul. (street), 21 St Climent, 22 Klimentská and Samcova ul. (streets), 23 Petrská ul. '*vicus theutonicorum*' and Biskupská ul. (streets) with St Peter, 24 Nám. Republiky (square) – St Benedict, 25 Týn area 1, 26 Ovocný trh (Fruit Market), s.c. Gallus town, 27 Křižovnické nám. (square), 28 Husova ul. (street) No. 232/I, 29 Husova ul. (street) No. 352/I, 30 Konviktská ul. (street) No. 291/I, 31 Karoliny Světlé (street) – St Cross, 32 Bartolomějská ul. (street), 33 St Martin

running to the south on the west (left) bank of the river (Fig. 17.2, 11, 12, 13; Sláma 1977, p. 110). Also at this time there was a settlement to the east on a piece of land between an old meander and the main course of the Vltava near Klárov (Fig. 17.2, 10; Hrdlička 1972, p. 644, 1984b, p. 645).

On the east (right) bank of the river, in the area known today as the Old Town, sporadic traces of settlement have been found which might also date to the 10th and 11th centuries (Fig. 17.2, 14, 15, 16; Pavlů 1971, p. 94, map 111, Hrdlička 1984b, p. 647). These are located close to the river in former meadow lands and the earliest archaeological horizons are assumed to relate to merchant communities settled next to trade routes by a ford across the Vltava at this point (Čarek 1966, p. 13), although there is another opinion that the crossing was actually further south (Pokorný 1985, p. 206). The existence of these early river-meadow communities is confirmed by a number of cemeteries, some of which are situated close to churches that still survive – for example, at the Rotunda of St Cross, with burials in its churchyard dating from the 10th and 11th centuries (Fig. 17.2, 31; Čarek 1966, Sláma 1977, p. 126; Merhautová 1971, p. 252). Others have been found beneath the old road network – for example, in Small Square (Malé nám: Fig. 17.2, west of 25; Dragoun 1981, p. 198) and in Dlouhá Street (Fig. 17.2, 20; Dragoun 1981, pp. 203–6), which has been dated by an S-shaped earring and a *denar* of Břetislav II (1092–1100).

Other isolated traces of settlement belonging to the 11th century have also been found to the northeast of the Old Town, the Maniny Terrace. Pottery of the 10th and 11th centuries, for example, was discovered between Klimentská and U. Samcova Streets in 1980 (Fig. 17.2, 22; Špaček 1983, p. 202). In settlement deposits below the presbytery of St Climent's church (Fig. 17.2, 21), there were several pieces of pottery dating to the second half of the 11th century. These were succeeded, later in the same century, by the cemetery and the apse belonging to the first phase of the church (Huml 1983, p. 93, 1987).

Close by, in the Poříčí area, and at about the same time, there appears also to have been a settlement of Germans (*vicus theutonicorum*), to which texts of the later 12th century refer when confirming ancient liberties (Vojtíšek 1953b, Mendl 1932, p. 237, Kejř 1969, p. 251, Kalina 1972, p. 73, Tomas 1984b, p. 43). The movement of these Germans towards the Old Town marketplace before 1217 (Kalina 1972, p. 92) was a contributory factor in the creation of the medieval town (Nový 1984, p. 27). The best archaeological evidence for this settlement has come from rescue excavations to the north of St Peter's church, in which 11 semiunderground houses were found, some of them with inner walls of stone and a bottleneck entrance with sloping steps (Fig. 17.2, 23;

Újezd), 34 Karlovo nám. (square), 35 Zderaz, 36 Na rybníčku (St Longin, today St Stephen), 37 Na bojišti (St John), 38 Vyšehradská ul. (street), 39 Krušina.

Key to geomorphology (after Záruba 1948): a Holocene alluvia in the Vltava valley, b Alluvial terrace IVc, c Alluvial terrace IVa – the Maniny Terrace, d Slope screes and clay.

Špaček 1978b, p. 387, 1983, p. 20). To the south of the church (the Bishop's Yard) is an area known as Hradištko ('the site of the castle') in some old accounts, and from here excavations have produced fragments of dressed stone (Huml 1971, p. 59, 1981a, p. 62) and the corner of an ashlar structure dating probably to the 12th century (Huml 1981b, pp. 176–7). Whether these are the remains of an early castle and whether they can be related to the German settlement are uncertain, because of the considerable disturbance caused by the church's cemetery and later buildings.

Another group of foreign merchants has been identified on the southern edge of the later Old Town, but as yet their ethnic origin is unknown. The evidence comes from 20 graves dating to the second half of the 10th and the 11th centuries which were found in 1936 in the modern Bartolomějská Street (Borkovský 1948, 1961, 1969, p. 38, Sláma 1977, p. 124). The graves were lined by circular or oblong arrangements of stones, a very unusual feature in Czechoslovakia, and the bodies were in coffins cut from the trunks of oak trees. It was these elements which led the excavator to speculate that the burials belonged to foreign merchants.

Another major element in the story of Prague's development at this time, Vyšehrad, lies at the southern edge of the Prague basin. On an elevated site above the east bank of the Vltava river, excavations have revealed a settlement which dates, in its earliest phases, to the first half of the 10th century (Nechvátal 1974, 1983a, 1983b). Later, from the 980s or 990s up to the beginning of the 11th century, coins were struck on the site (Hásková 1975), but Vyšehrad really rose to prominence when the first king of Bohemia, Vratislav I (prince from 1061 and king from 1086), moved to make his *capitula* there in 1070 (Friedrich 1904, I, CDB, nos 384, 387). Archaeological work has shown that he established at Vyšehrad a palace complex within an acropolis, separated by a moat from another group of both sacred and secular buildings. Outstanding among these latter structures was the Basilica of St Peter, a large building, 33 metres long and 17 metres wide, which, excavations have shown, originally had a baptistery in front of its western apse. He was also responsible for the construction of a basilica of Hirsau type, now the church of St Lawrence, to replace a pre-Romanesque structure of cruciform plan on the same site. Finally, in this complex, was the rotunda of St Martin, which still survives and which originally formed part of a parish church lying within a cemetery.

Prior to 1091, according to the Chronicle of Kosmas (Bretholz 1923, II, no. 45), there appears also to have been a *vicus vissegradensis* or extramural settlement of Vyšehrad occupied by rich merchants. The same source (no. 57) refers also to Jewish merchants and traders having a synagogue there in 1124, and they were clearly living in the *vicus* as well as below Prague Castle, having moved to the east bank of the river and to the protection of the king following the pogroms of 1096–98. Precisely where this settlement lay, whether to the north or to the east of the fortified palace, has been, and still is, the subject of much debate (Čarek 1966, Nechvátal 1983a, 1983b).

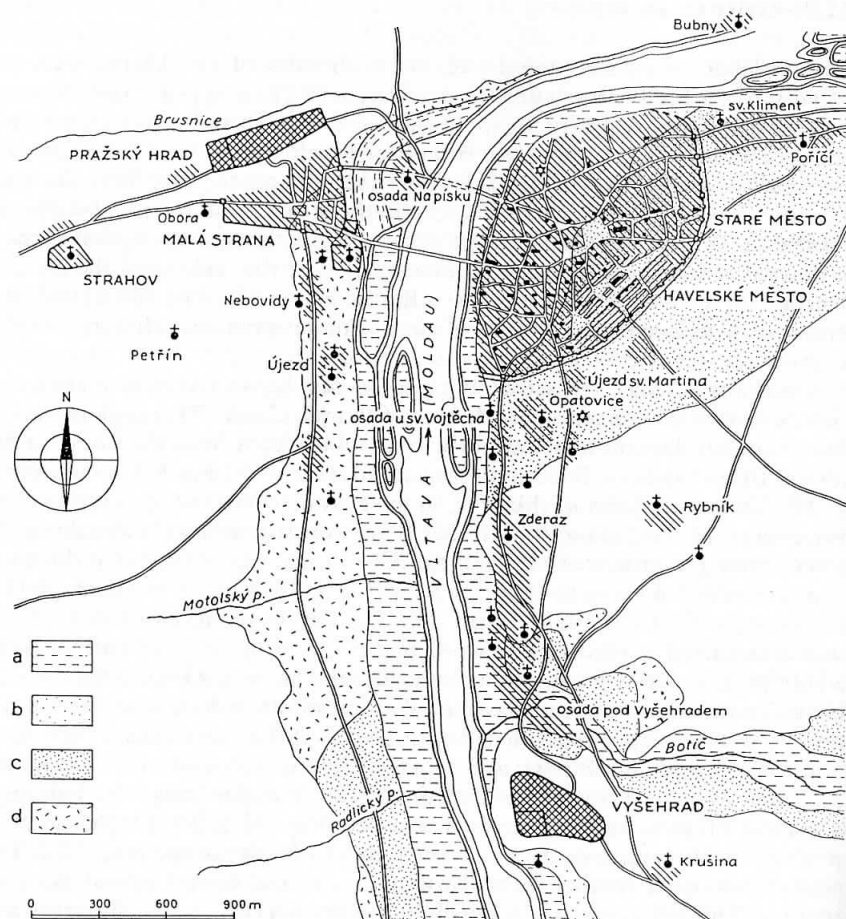
## 12th-century expansion

The number of archaeological sites on both sides of the Vltava increases rapidly when 12th-century horizons are reached. There appears, therefore, to be continuing development based on the three main foci of earlier settlement: the area around and to the south of Prague Castle on the west bank, later to become the Lesser Town (Malá Strana); the area on the east bank, later to become the Old Town (Staré Město); and the area around the royal centre of Vyšehrad. Within this development there is a notable trend towards increased industrial activity, particularly manufacturing. At the same time the general increase in economic activity that all this represents also stimulated the creation of new farmsteads and villages with proprietorial churches in the extramural areas.

On the west bank the settlement sites so far discovered cluster around a number of smaller churches at the foot of Prague Castle. This agglomeration has its core at the southern end of the road which leads from the castle, in the area of the present-day Sněmovní Street (Fig. 17.2, 7; Hlavsa & Vančura 1983, p. 17). To the southeast of this core, in the second half of the 12th century, an impressive set of buildings (Fig. 17.2, 11) was constructed by the Knights of St John, serving to protect the bridgehead. The bridge was of timber at this time and is recorded as being in existence as early as 1118, when it was damaged by floodwaters (Bretholz 1923, III, no. 44). The first stone bridge (Fig. 17.2, 27) was constructed in the years 1158–72 under Queen Judith, the wife of King Vladislav I, and this greatly benefited the growth of settlement on the east bank. To the east of the core, on the valley meadows at Klárov just above the flood line, the earlier settlement continued to thrive, and excavations have uncovered the establishment of a metalworker whose activities, during the 12th and 13th centuries, also included agriculture and fishing. The buildings consisted of two semiunderground houses (Fig. 17.2, 10; Hrdlička 1972, p. 655). To the south, by St Lawrence's church in Nebovidy (Fig. 17.2, 12), pottery has dated another metalworking area to the second half of the 12th century. This consisted of a complex of saucer-shaped clay-lined hearths and furnaces edged with stone (Šírová 1981, p. 107). Further to the south of this lay the settlement of Újezd (Fig. 17.3), occupied by both farmers and craftsmen (Huml 1973, p. 77). In 1968 we excavated several settlement features, such as semiunderground houses and grain-storage pits, which can be dated on ceramic evidence to the beginning of the 12th century (Čiháková 1984b, p. 257). In 1985–6 our attention moved westwards, close to the old trade road which ran southwards from Prague Castle (the modern Karmelitská Street), where we found other features, including a rectangular stone building, a furnace, and storage pits, which had been destroyed by the first half of the 13th century.

On the east bank, in the later Old Town area, craftsmen's workshops have been found both on the meadow lands and spreading on to the previously unsettled river terrace above (Pavlu 1971, p. 94, map 111, Ječný *et al.* 1984). A good example was found on the northern edge of this area in Curie Square





**Figure 17.3** The Prague agglomeration between Prague Castle and Vyšehrad up to the middle of the 13th century: Staré Město, Havelské Město – St Gallus town, Malá Strana, church and settlement (key to geomorphology as in Figure 17.2; drawing: Štěpán Novák).

(including Sanitova Street) in 1972 (Fig. 17.2, 17; Huml 1981a). The late-12th- and early-13th-century complex of features (Dragoun 1979, Čiháková 1984b) included eight semiunderground houses, two storage pits, and six clay-lined furnaces. These were sealed by the foundations of the Cyriac monastery, founded by Přemysl II in the middle of the 13th century. A similar complex has been found nearby, under the convent of the St Clara order, which was founded in 1234 (Fig. 17.2, 18; Borkovský 1956, p. 194, Reichertová 1967, p. 525). Further inland to the south, on a site near the fruit market, Ovocný trh (Fig. 17.2, 26), three fragmentary and one complete oval furnaces

associated with metalworking have been found, sealed with early-13th-century deposits below the later, planned St Gallus Town. Other metal workshops of the 12th century have been found at Bethlehem Square (Pleiner 1953, p. 369), Stehlíková (Ječný *et al.* 1984, p. 263), and Konviktská Street (Fig. 17.2, 30; Draganová 1982, p. 419).

Other nonindustrial settlement sites have been found on the east side of the Vltava. One of the most interesting is the Týn Yard, where both the Municipal Museum and the Archaeological Institute of CAS (ČSAV) have been excavating for a number of years (Fig. 17.2, 25; Richterová 1979, p. 25, Hrdlička *et al.* 1981). In its earliest phase, in the second half of the 12th century, it was a moated enclosure with a trapezium-shaped ground plan and a timber building on its outer edge. Elsewhere, centred on what became the market-places of the later Old and St Gallus Towns (Tomas 1984a, p. 55), stone buildings with ashlar masonry and vaulted rooms also began to appear at this time as forerunners of urban housing. At this stage, these are probably best interpreted as the cores of farmsteads, as in Řetězová Street and the *curia* next to St Linhart's church (Merhautová 1971, p. 280). Other traces of 12th-century settlement have been found along the road running north from Vyšehrad, following the line of the modern Spálená Street in the direction of the Old Town marketplace (Hrdlička 1982).

### 13th-century developments

In 1257, on the west bank of the Vltava to the south of Prague Castle, King Přemysl II (1253–78) created a planned town, sweeping away the pre-existing arrangements and housing (Hlavsa & Vančura 1983). This became known as the Lesser Town (Fig. 17.3: Malá Strana). The basis of its population was created by the transfer of the German colonists who had previously been settled in the area of Petrská Street (Fig. 17.2, 23), on the other side of the river, and who had been gradually shifting south towards the marketplace in the Old Town from the beginning of the 13th century (Mendl 1932, p. 255, Kalina 1972, pp. 76–7, Nový 1984, p. 33). In fact, this complex of settlements on the east side of the Vltava, known as the Old Town from the 14th century to the present day, was called Prague Greater Town (Fig. 17.3: Staré Město) in the 13th century (Fiala 1966), and in the 1230s and 1240s part of it was walled by order of King Wenceslaus I (Kalina 1972, pp. 83, 91). By the middle of the century the walling of the Old Town was complete (Špaček 1978a, p. 381), with its circuit also including a district known as *nova civitas circa St Gallum* (Fig. 17.3: Havelské Město), which had been created in the 1220s and 1230s, during the reign of Wenceslaus I (1230–53), with the help of Eberhard, then Master of the Mint (Friedrich 1904, CDB, V, no. 452). It had been laid out on a rectangular grid plan, but it also incorporated some older houses with massive towers (Čarek 1947, p. 42, Líbal *et al.* 1966, pp. 45, 55).

Development within the newly walled town was rapid, with the infilling of previously open areas and a remarkable increase in the quantity of housing.



The settlement was transformed, as can be seen in the excavations in the Týn Yard, where the moat was filled in by about the middle of the 13th century. Its original core area was enclosed in stone walls and its yard space extended eastwards. Documentary sources suggest that it was being used at this time by foreign merchants who had to store their goods there and pay customs duty on them, and, indeed, excavations revealed the presence of spacious structures which were in all probability the warehouses used for this purpose.

In this period of transformation and rapid growth, the emerging network of urban streets sometimes respected the old layout and sometimes radically altered it. Instances of plan stability were seen in excavations on Husova and Jilská Streets (Fig. 17.2, 29), where the road line was confirmed in the first half of the 13th century by a Romanesque ashlar-built house standing next to six semiunderground and underground houses, which were later replaced by a Gothic building (Hrdlička 1980, 1983, Fig. 6, p. 625, Dragoun 1984, p. 12). Instances of plan change occurred, for example, in Small Square (Malé nám: Fig. 17.2, west of 25; Dragoun 1982) and in Dlouhá Street, near the northeast corner of the Old Town Square (Fig. 17.2, 20). In each place earlier cemeteries lay beneath both the cobbled road surfaces and the houses along their frontage. Similar cobbling for road surfaces of the first half of the 13th century has also been seen in excavations in Kaprova Street (Fig. 17.2, 16) near the Vltava ford (Šírová 1977, p. 219) and the modern fruit market, Ovocný trh (Fig. 17.2, 26). At about this time also the marketplace of the Greater or Old Town was fixed within the street plan, with the hospital for the merchants and the original prince's palace of Týn located on its eastern side (Novotný 1952, p. 413, Hrdlička 1977, p. 213, Fig. 43, nos 21–5).

The enclosure of the town within its walls caused a radical though gradual raising of its interior ground levels, because of the steady accumulation of rubbish and building materials, reaching a depth of 2 metres in the Old Town. It was even deeper in the Vltava meadow areas, where ground levels reached those of the river terraces above. As a result, the ground floors of surviving Romanesque and early Gothic structures lie well below the modern ground surface at cellar level (Čarek 1947, Píša 1971, p. 85). Indeed, many surviving Romanesque buildings may still remain to be discovered in this way, as has been demonstrated by two found as recently as 1983 and 1985 near the church of St Nicholas (Dragoun 1984, pp. 12–15, Fig. 1).

From the end of the 12th and into the 13th centuries monastic orders continued to establish themselves in the growing town on the east bank of the river. The Knights of God's Grave Cross appeared at Zderaz (Fig. 17.3) before 1188, and the Teutonic Knights at Poříčí in 1215, although later they moved to the church of St Benedict (Fig. 17.2, 24) in the Old Town, where they established a Commandery (*comenda*: Friedrich 1904, CDB, III, no. 32, Olmerová 1982, p. 433, Kalina 1972, p. 96). An early circular church of the Knights Templar has been found in excavations below the choir of the church of St Anna, but other evidence exists for their presence next to the church of St Lawrence before 1233 (Merhautová 1971, p. 267). The Dominicans had established themselves in 1226 by the older church of St Climent (Fig. 17.2,

21), which was itself remodelled under their influence, having a rectangular presbyterium added with the same width as the earlier nave (Huml 1983). Later in the century this order moved its activities to the riverside near the Judith Bridge. Finally, during this period, the order of Clara established the monastery of St Agnes (Fig. 17.2, 18) and the Minor Brothers (Minorites) the monastery of St James within the Old Town.

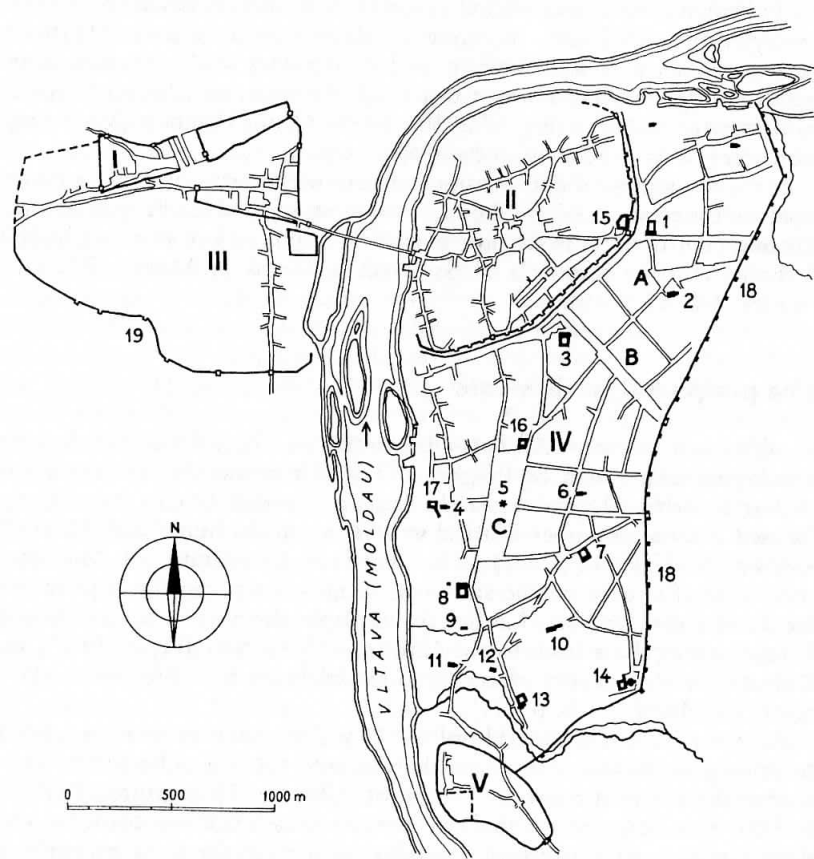
As the town grew and its commercial activities increased, so the agricultural aspect of the town receded. The main suppliers of food for Prague became the farming communities in its close neighbourhood, such as Poříčí, Chudobice, Rybník with the Rotunda of St Stephen, Újezd St Martin, Zderaz, and Hrádek (Fig. 17.3).

### The peripheral settlements

In addition to the settlements (as shown in Fig. 17.1), which lay close to the developing urban area of Prague, and which eventually became absorbed within it, archaeological research, largely through rescue excavation, has focused also on a number of rural settlements in the hinterland (Huml 1982, Klápště *et al.* 1983, p. 387). The work of the Municipal Museum has concentrated largely on the study of villages on the northern periphery of modern Prague. We have located, for example, the historic cores of Vysočany village, which dates back to the 12th or 13th century (Huml 1980), and of Kobylisy, with evidence of continuous settlement from the 9th to the 13th centuries (Huml 1981b, p. 171).

Excavations at Čimice (Huml 1984, p. 295) have revealed a settlement beginning in the 6th century and lasting until the 9th, followed by an early medieval settlement from the 11th to the 12th or 13th centuries (Pavlů 1984, p. 315). On this site, a shift in the location of the settlement can be demonstrated, since it moved from the southern to the northern bank of the river. Apart from underground houses, we have also discovered two buildings constructed in a dry-stone technique. During the final phase of the settlement, by the end of the 13th century, a farmstead and a castle with a wet moat were established (Huml 1985, p. 296).

At the northwestern edge of modern Prague, at Bubeneč, settlement features dating to the second half of the 12th century have been found (Richterová 1982, p. 523). Finally, on the south side of Prague, there have been excavations at the castle of Chodov, which was circular in ground plan with a wet moat and two towers of which one, the southwestern, housed the main entrance and a drawbridge (Huml 1978). Chodov has a strong resemblance to several contemporary castles in western Europe, most notably Oud Teylingen at Warmond, Egmond, and Restormel.



**Figure 17.4** The Prague agglomeration from the middle of the 13th century up to 1380 (according to Ing. arch. V. Lorenc; drawing: Štěpán Novák): I Hradčany with the castle, II Staré Město (Old Town), III Malá Strana (Lesser Site), IV Nové Město (New Town), V Vyšehrad. The main squares (marketplaces): A Gorkij square (rec. Senovážné), B Václavské – Wenzel's square (rec. Koňský trh – marketplace), C Karlovo nám. (square; rec. Dobytčí trh – marketplace). 1–14, Gothic churches, including 8, Emauses monastery and 14, Karlov; 15, Týn; 16, town hall of the New Town; 17, royal fortress; 18, fortification of the New Town; 19, fortification of the Lesser Site (Note. Some of the sacred and profane buildings of Prague Castle and Vyšehrad have been omitted owing to lack of space).

## Prague in the 14th century

The expansion of the 13th century continued unabated into the first half of the next, with the result that extensive extramural settlements were developed, largely extending the manufacturing and marketing base of the city's activities. This position was consolidated at the beginning of the reign of Charles IV (1346–78), when, in 1348, the New Town of Prague was founded (Fig. 17.4, IV). The physical expression of this, on the east side of the river, was the creation of an outer town wall, well beyond the defences of the Old Town (Fig. 17.4, II), running from the banks of the Vltava in the north to the fortifications at Vyšehrad (Fig. 17.4, V) in the south, and enclosing the bulk of the extramural settlements (Fig. 17.4, IV), including Poříčí, with its church of St Peter, Rybník, with the Rotunda of St Stephen, and Opatovice, with the church of St Michael. On the west side of the river another line of fortifications extended the Lesser Town (Fig. 17.4, V), both southwards to include the industrial settlements along the trade road, such as Nebovidy and Újezd, and eastwards beyond Hradčany and Prague Castle (Fig. 17.4, I).

From the beginning, the New Town on the east bank had three major marketplaces (Fig. 17.4, A–C) linked by radial roads (Lorenc 1973). In the northern sector the urban area was characterized by artisan industrial activity and in the southern church institutions predominated – for example, the monastery of the Augustinian order at Karlov (Fig. 17.4, 14), the *capitula* by St Apollinar, and the monastery of the Emauses (Fig. 17.4, 8), used by Slavic monks.

The founding of the New Town completed the medieval development of the city, so that during the reign of Charles IV Prague became one of the most important cultural centres of Europe. In recent years, archaeology and architectural study have provided significant new material information about the growth of this centre. Indeed, the modern increase in archaeological knowledge holds out hopes that the whole picture of Prague's development, worked out by generations of historians, will be more complete by the end of the century, so that a new synthesis of the city's history can be written.

## Acknowledgements

I wish to thank Drs Z. Dragoun, Z. Boháč, and J. Sláma for their helpful and stimulating comments. Finally, this chapter is dedicated to the memory of Dr Antonín Hejna (1920–86), a prominent figure in postwar historic archaeology in Czechoslovakia.

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# 18 *Archaeological evidence for the development and urbanization of Kiev from the 8th to the 14th centuries*

OLEG M. IOANNISYAN

(translated by Katharine Judelson)\*

## Introduction

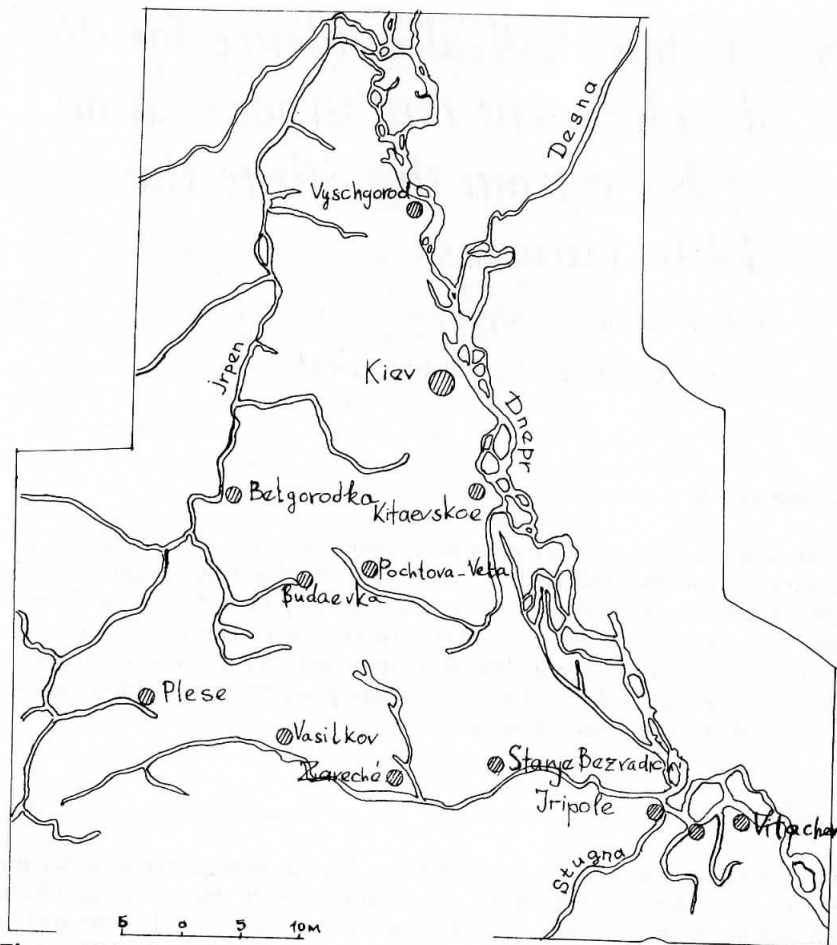
Archaeological study in Kiev goes back over 150 years, and the significant quantities of material collected in that time mean that it is possible to piece together the main facts about Kiev's urban development during the Middle Ages. Archaeology can add to the body of knowledge already provided by written sources, topographical data, and toponymy, but it is now taking place against the background of a rapidly expanding modern city which has lost virtually all of its original urban plan.

## Origins

Kiev, which was to become a tribal focus for the eastern Slavic tribe, the Polyane, and later the first capital city of ancient Rus (Fig. 18.1), had been inhabited from an early date. Scythian pottery has been found in the area of the modern city, as have isolated classical coins (the earliest of which dates from the 5th century BC). Then there are hoards of Roman coins and other objects imported from the classical world (Karger 1958, pp. 72–82, Tolochko 1972, pp. 38–9). The latest material associated with the early prehistory of Kiev dates to the first half of the first millennium AD. Tolochko points out that 4th-century material in the area of Kiev 'is encountered very rarely and we have virtually no artefacts for the first half of the 5th century', and based on this he suggests that 'this points to a kind of chronological pause in the settlement of the Kiev area', a temporary eclipse which may be associated with nomadic incursions during the 'Great Migration of the Peoples' (Tolochko 1981, p. 50).

It appears that new settlement in the area now occupied by Kiev began

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**Figure 18.1** Location of Kiev among the ancient Rus settlements of the 10th to the 13th centuries.

perhaps as early as the end of the 5th or the beginning of the 6th centuries. This is shown by parts of the cultural horizon found on the Detinka, Zamkovaya, and Starokievskaya hills which date back to the 6th to 8th centuries. By the 8th to the 9th centuries, the period immediately preceding the formation of ancient Rus, a number of settlements of Slavs from the Polyane tribe grew up within what was to become the site of Kiev. These settlements, situated on the three hills already mentioned and also on part of the low-lying area on the river bank called Podol, were later to form the main nucleus of Kiev.

### A central place in the state formation of Rus (8th–10th centuries)

It appears that Starokievskaya Hill was the main settlement; indeed, it was to become the historical centre of the city. By the 9th century it occupied approximately 2 hectares and had acquired wooden fortifications and earth ramparts, remains of which were found during archaeological investigations in 1912, 1936, and 1969 (Kilievich 1982, p. 27). Opinion among scholars is divided, however, about when these fortifications were constructed: Karger, for example, dates them to the 8th to 9th centuries (Karger 1958, p. 103), while Tolochko opts for the 7th to 8th (1981, p. 51). Yet one thing is certain: by the time the state of ancient Rus had taken shape, this settlement was already a centre of some importance. A number of dwellings dating from the third quarter of the first millennium have been found there, together with remains of a monumental structure in the form of an open area of compressed clay, paved with four rectangular extensions marking the points of the compass, which also belong to this period. Fires and a large number of bones and skulls of domestic animals were found round this monumental structure, and this led Khvoika, the first archaeologist investigating the site, to interpret it as a pagan temple (Khvoika 1913, p. 66). Further investigations in 1937 confirmed this (Karger 1958, pp. 105–12).

This means that as early as the 8th and 9th centuries the settlement on Starokievskaya Hill was clearly set apart from others in the future area of Kiev, in terms of its size, its fortifications, and its ritual complex, and provided a tribal centre for the Polyane, even before it was a town in the true sense of the word. The significant advantages given by its location led to its later rapid growth at the time when the state of Rus was forming. This growth continued during the early years of the state, when Kiev became the first Russian capital. The major reasons for Kiev's pre-eminence have been identified by scholars: its central position on the Dnieper trade route linking northern Europe with Byzantium; its position on natural vantage points surrounded by the rivers Dnieper and Lybed, with their minor tributaries; and its position at the point where the boundaries of several tribal territories met (Tolochko 1981, p. 60).

After the formation of the state of Rus at the end of the 9th century, with Kiev as its capital, the area occupied by the town began to grow very rapidly, and several settlements situated near each other merged to constitute a single administrative centre. Particular evidence for this is the enormous barrow cemetery on Starokievskaya Hill, which is far larger than is necessary for the population of a comparatively small settlement covering 2 hectares and contrasts with the total absence of burials in the settlement on neighbouring Zamkovaya Hill. As Tolochko points out, this strongly suggests that the cemetery on Starokievskaya Hill was shared by both settlements (Tolochko 1981, p. 70).

During this same period, active settlement began on land on the lower bank of the Dnieper at the foot of the Kiev hills known as Podol. This was to be a

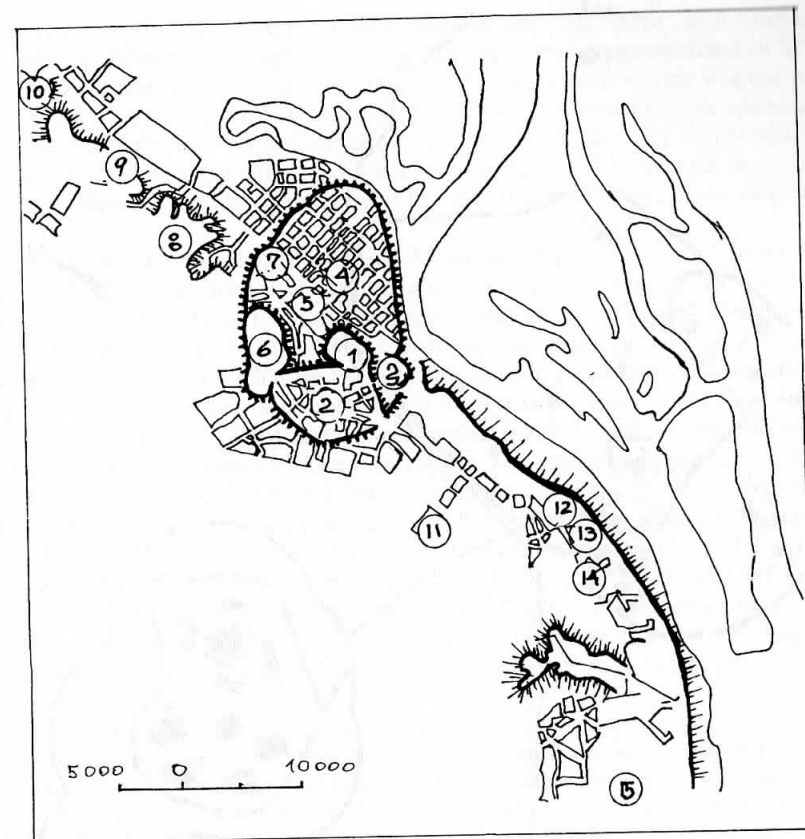
centre for traders and artisans. Houses which have been excavated there show that, in the 9th to the 10th centuries, various types of craft production were taking place, such as tanning, iron-working, and the smelting of bronze (Tolochko 1981, pp. 74–7, Gupalo 1982, p. 55).

### Vladimir's City – Gorod Vladimira (10th–11th centuries)

During the reign of Vladimir Svyatoslavich (960–1015) Kiev entered its first period of ascendance, by which time the original nucleus of the town on Starokievskaya Hill had already grown to an area of nearly 10 hectares (Figs 18.2 & 3). Vladimir undertook to build new fortifications to enclose the significantly larger space, and this was to become Kiev's citadel, eventually acquiring a new name – Vladimir's City. It was here that the first Russian stone church was built after Christianity had been adopted by the newly formed state of Rus. Many more were to be built in and around Kiev during the next century or so and a selection of their ground plans, derived from both archaeological excavation and standing structures, has been brought together in one comparative figure which demonstrates their strong generic relationship (Fig. 18.4). The first church, dedicated to the Blessed Virgin but better known as the Tithe or Desyatinnaya Church, set the trend (Fig. 18.4a). It was completed in 996 (Rappoport 1982, pp. 7–8, Kilievich 1982, pp. 60–66; Ascev 1982, pp. 28–35, Komech 1987, pp. 168–78). Its construction marks the beginning of Russian architectural history. The remains of this magnificent building, constructed by Byzantine craftsmen and destroyed by Batiya when he captured Kiev in 1240, were excavated between 1908 and 1914 by Mileev and in 1938–9 by Karger (Karger 1961, pp. 9–59).

The Tithe Church was built from flat, slab-like bricks or 'plinths' (*plinfa*) using a mortar mixed with finely pulverized baked clay, a mixture known locally as *tsemyanka*. The bricks were laid in a 'recessed' technique, with gaps in which alternating brick courses are recessed from the wall-plane and covered with mortar. This construction technique, brought to Russia by master builders from Byzantium and typical of the metropolitan school in Constantinople, was from that time on used in ancient Russian architecture (Krautheimer 1965, p. 258 & pl. 151). The Tithe Church was larger (43.8 × 36.4 m) than a mere church or chapel, which suggests that it was intended to serve the court of the ruling prince. However, the evidence for this structure was principally in the form of foundation trenches, so firm conclusions can be made only about the basic features of its plan. It was a church with three naves, three apses, and six columns, probably supporting a dome, with the whole surrounded by galleries. Various ideas for its reconstruction have been put forward, but they are all still controversial.

The Tithe Church was decorated with carvings of marble and limestone, some specially executed for this purpose and others reused from classical or early Byzantine buildings. It would appear that examples of such carving were probably brought to Kiev from Chersonese (Kherson) in the Crimea. The

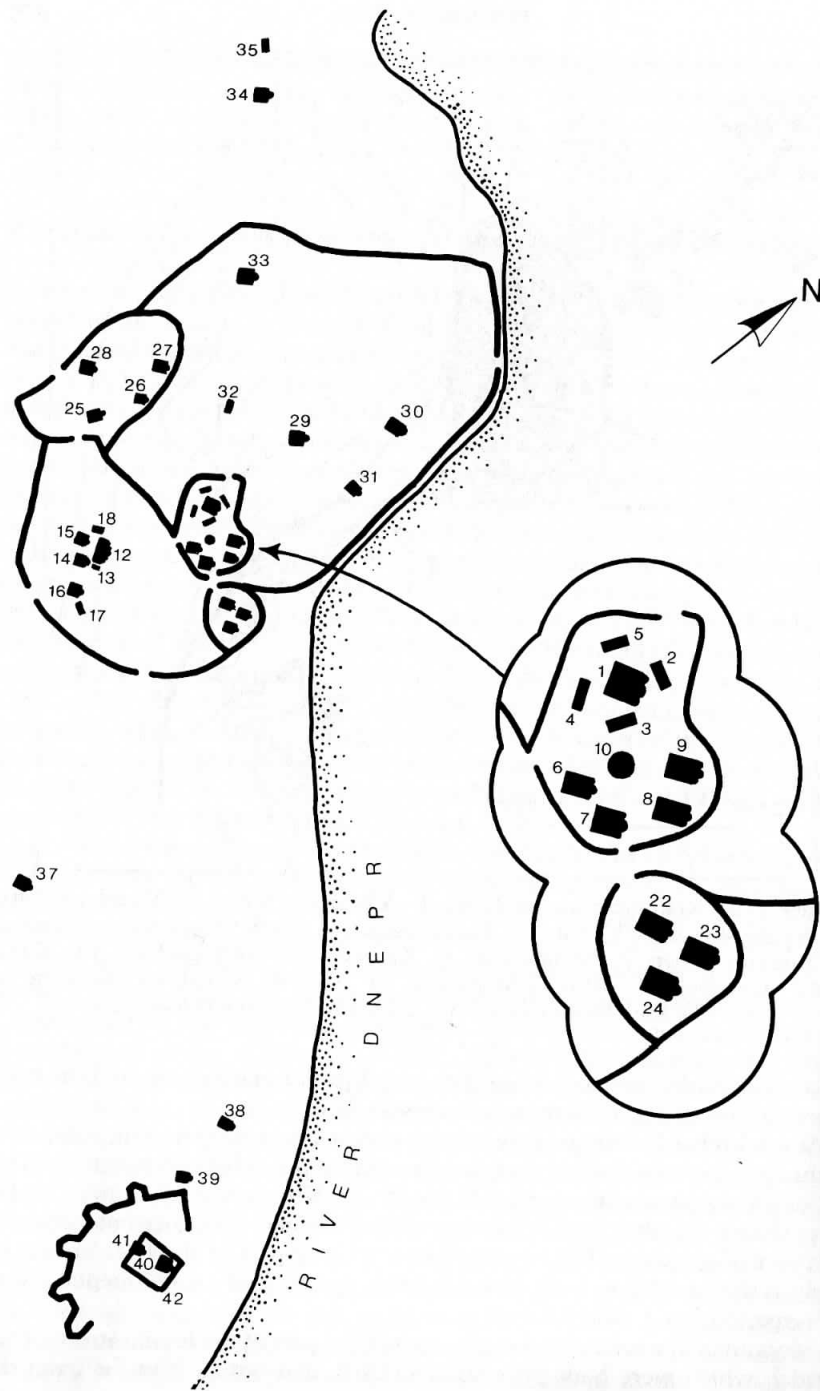


**Figure 18.2** Key locations in Kiev: 1 Vladimir's City, 2 Yaroslav's City, 3 Izyaslav-Svyatopolk's City, 4 Podol district, 5 Castle Hill (Zamkovaya gora), 6 Kopyrev Konets, 7 Shchekavitsa, 8 Khorevitsa, 9 Dorogozhichi, 10 Kirillovski Monastery, 11 Klovski Monastery, 12 Ugorski Wood, 13 Beryostovo, 14 The Kiev Monastery of the Caves, 15 Vydbitski Monastery.

floors consisted of mosaics made with majolica and marble tiles, and the walls were also decorated with mosaics and with frescoes.

Several other buildings were constructed at the same time using the same techniques to form a palace complex, the official princely residence in the Kiev citadel. Excavations (Karger 1961, pp. 59–76, Kharlamov 1985, pp. 110–11) have shown that these buildings were not for ordinary residence but rather for ceremonial purposes. This means that the central part of the Kiev citadel, as early as the late 10th to early 11th centuries, consisted of a monumental group of ceremonial and official buildings.

Monumental structures were also an integral part of the fortifications of the citadel, which were built principally in earth and wood. Not far from the



intersection of the modern Vladimirskaia and Bolshaya Zhitomirskaya streets, excavations revealed the remains of a gate tower constructed of bricks on a stone foundation (Kilievich 1982, p. 51). This tower, which was the main ceremonial entrance into Vladimir's City, was known by two alternative names, the Sofia or Batiya Gate. A number of workshops for the production of building material for these constructions were found within the area of the citadel. They included, for example, kilns for firing the bricks (Kilievich 1982, pp. 70–75).

A considerable number of ordinary houses dating from the 10th to the 11th centuries have also been investigated within the area of the citadel. They had been cut into the subsoil and were of semisunken type (Karger 1958, pp. 346, 350, Rappoport 1975, pp. 58–9). Recently a number of scholars have attempted to review earlier ideas about this main type of domestic structure in ancient Kiev. It is now suggested that they were constructed with walls resting on the ground, with only their lower parts sunk into shallow pits (Kilievich 1982, p. 78). The absence of evidence for wooden superstructures can be explained by the specific preservation conditions in the Upper Town in Kiev, where the subsoil does not preserve organic remains and intense urban activity in subsequent periods has led to the destruction of evidence for posts above ground (Kilievich 1982, p. 78, Tolochko 1972, p. 118). Tolochko (1972, p. 118, 1976a, pp. 100–3, 1983, pp. 98–102), Gupalo (in Tolochko 1981, p. 85), and Kilievich (1982, p. 78) consider that this type of structure should be regarded not as a semisunken but rather as a framed, post-built type of house

← **Figure 18.3** Main monumental buildings in 10th–13th century Kiev: 1 Tithe Church, 2–5 Palaces of the Princes, 6 Fyodorovski Monastery (cathedral founded in 1129), 7 Andreevski Yanchin Monastery (cathedral consecrated in 1131), 8 Church of the Three Prelates (1183), 9 Church of the Exaltation of the Cross (1183), 10 Rotunda (second half of the 12th century), 11 Sofia Gate (late 10th century), 12 Cathedral of St Sophia, 13 Wall of the Metropolitan's Court, 14 Georgievski Monastery (church constructed c. 1051–3), 15 Church of Irina (c. 1051–3), 16 Nameless Church, 17 Stone Palace, 18 Bath house in the Metropolitan's Court, 19 Golden Gate (1037), 20 Lyadskie Gate (c. 1037), 21 Zhi-dovskie Gate (c. 1037), 22 Cathedral of the Mikhailovski Zlatoverkhi Monastery (founded in 1108), 23 Dmitrievskaya Church, 24 Church of St Peter (c. 1090), 25–26 Churches of the Semionovski Monastery in Kopyrev Konets (second half of the 11th century), 27 Church of St John (founded in 1121), 28 Nameless Church (founded in 1121), 29 Church of the Assumption in Pirogoshcha (1132–6, rebuilt in second half of the 12th century), 30 Novogorod Chapel (Church of St Mikhail) (c. mid-12th century), 31 Turova Chapel (Church of Boris and Gleb) (c. mid-12th century), 32 Stone building on Zamkovaya (Castle) Hill (date of construction unknown), 33 Church in Shchekavitsa (first mentioned in a chronicle of 1183), 34 Church of St Nikolai, 35 Stone building (date of construction unknown), 36 Kirillovskaya Church (c. 1140), 37 Klovski Monastery (1075–1108), 38 Church of St Nikolai (late 11th–early 12th century), 39 Church of the Saviour (early 12th century), 40 Church of the Assumption in the Monastery of the Caves (1073–89), 41 Church of the Trinity over the Gate of the Kiev Monastery of the Caves (c. 1108), 42 Stone wall of the Kiev Monastery of the Caves (12th century).



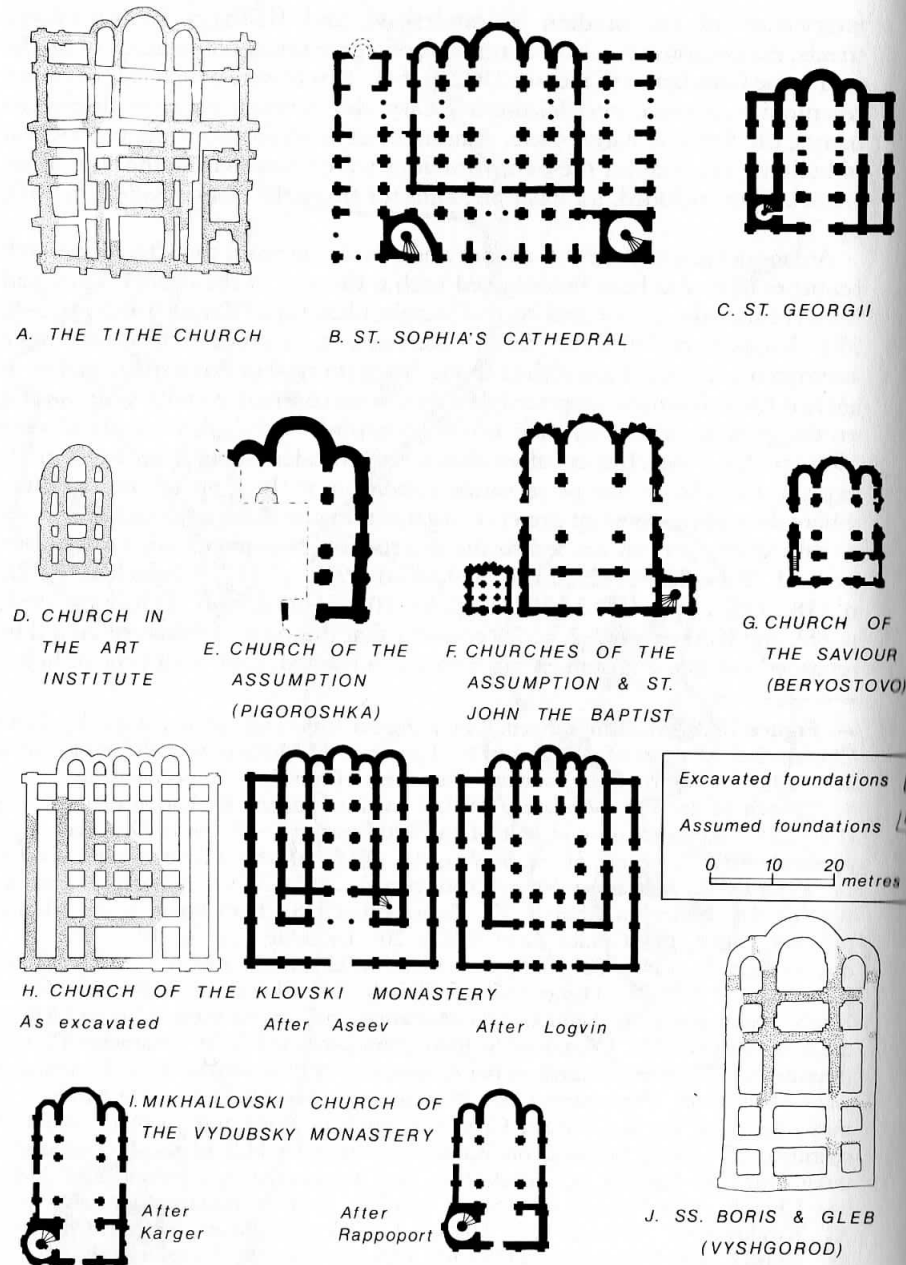


Figure 18.4 Plans of 11 early churches in Kiev and its environs (redrawn by D. Austin from sketches and plans provided by O. M. Ioannisyen).

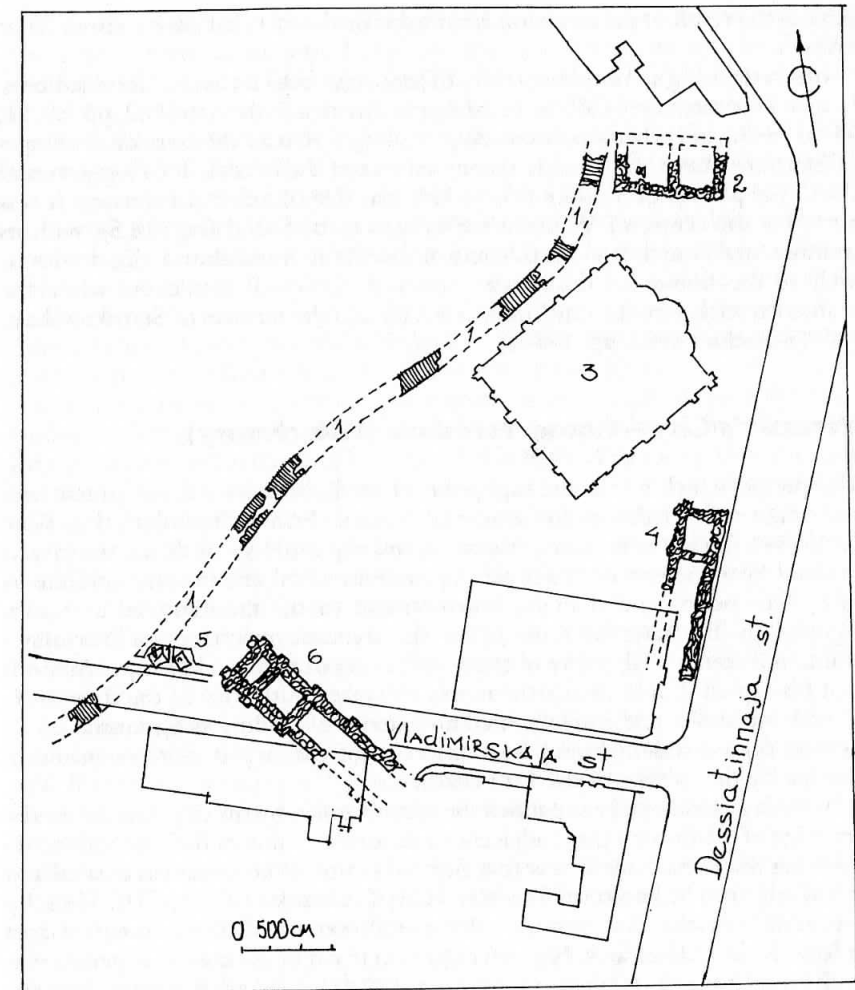


Figure 18.5 Principal buildings in the central part of Vladimir's City: 1 Moat round the ancient Kiev settlement, 2 Palace, 3 Tithe Church, 4 southern Palace, 5 Ancient Russian dwellings, 6 western Palace.

with a number of rooms dug into the earth. The posts above the ground were the main constructional element in such dwellings, and were placed in the corners and along the edges of the sunken rooms. They served as support for the roofs, while boards or planks for walls were slotted horizontally into grooves cut vertically in the corner posts. Houses of this sort have been discovered during excavations in the Kiev citadel and on the terraces of Starokievskaya Hill, alongside buildings of a similar shape in which no trace of post construction was found, although whether the absence of evidence for

posts is the result of preservation conditions or the fact that none existed is not known.

It is interesting to note that traces of industrial activity were identified only in a small percentage of all the buildings in this area (Kilievich 1982, pp. 89, 91, 93–5, 98–9), and what is particularly revealing is that all these are on the slopes of Starokievskaya Hill outside the upper area of the citadel. This suggests that the upper plateau of Starokievskaya Hill was free of industrial activity. It was here that the centre of Vladimir's City was to be found (Fig. 18.5), with its monumental churches and residences of feudal lords and church dignitaries, as well as the houses of those who serviced the royal residence, while the craftsmen settled on the outskirts of the city and the terraces of Starokievskaya Hill (Tolochko 1983, pp. 194–8).

### Yaroslav's City – Gorod Yaroslava (11th century)

The period which marks the highpoint of medieval Kiev's development was the reign of Vladimir Svyatoslavich's son, Prince Yaroslav the Wise (1016–54). These were years of extraordinarily rapid growth for the city, a brilliant flowering of its craftsmanship, monumental architecture, and literature. This period saw a major enhancement of the international authority enjoyed by the state of Rus, when the dynastic marriages of Yaroslav's children linked it with many of the royal houses of medieval Europe. Anxious that his capital should match the newly enhanced authority of the state itself, Yaroslav planned and implemented an extensive building programme on an unprecedented scale, turning Kiev into one of the largest cities in medieval Europe by the middle of the 11th century.

Yaroslav considerably expanded the area occupied by the city. On the southern edge of Vladimir's City, adjacent to its southern line of defence and incorporating the Sofia Gate, a new fortified district of 72 hectares was created and this was later to be known as Yaroslav's City (Tolochko 1976a, p. 57). Thus, by the middle of the 11th century, the overall extent of Kiev's fortified area amounted to 102 hectares. No other Russian town in the medieval period was built on such a scale (Rappoport 1967, pp. 187, 189), and among contemporary European towns Kiev was one of the largest (Bunin & Savarenskaya 1979, p. 134). The total length of the new fortifications was 3.5 kilometres; the height of the earth ramparts was between 12 and 16 metres and their width at the base was more than 25 metres (Rappoport 1956, pp. 96–7, 129). The excavation trench cut through these ramparts by Rappoport in 1951 made possible comment on construction techniques. At the core, vertical oak timbers had been rammed into the subsoil, then earth had been piled around them to form a bank. The upper part of the timbers protruded to serve as palisades. According to calculations made by Rappoport, around 630,000 cubic metres of earth and approximately 50,000 cubic metres of timber would have been used. He estimated that the period of construction lasted for four years and that over 1000 people were engaged in the work every day (Rappoport 1956, p. 97).

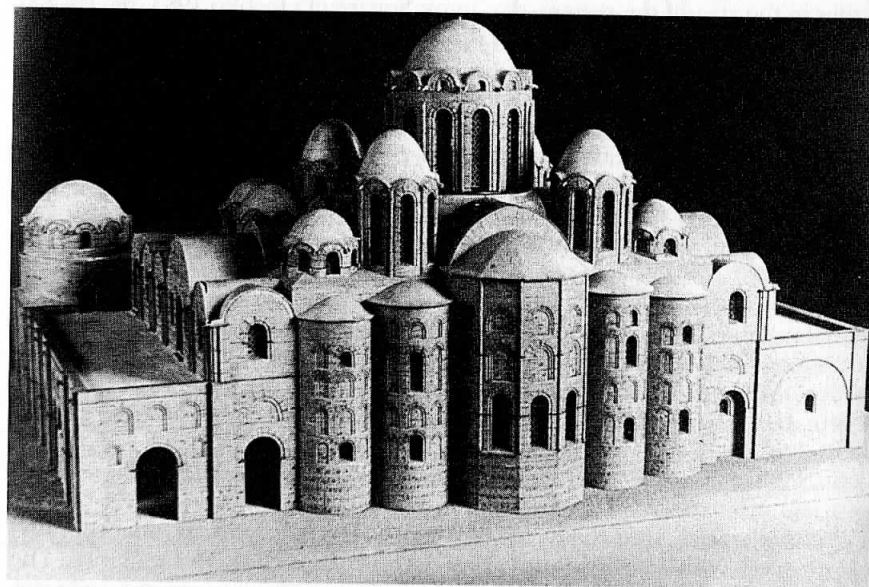
Yaroslav's City is linked to Vladimir's City by way of the Sophia Gate. There were three more gate towers in the new fortifications: the Zoloty (Golden) Gate, the Lyadskie Gate, and the Zhidovskie (Jewish) Gate. What is left of the Golden Gate has been subjected on several occasions to thorough architectural and archaeological investigation (Tolochko 1981, pp. 142–73, Vysotski 1982) and in 1982 a protective cover in the form of a reconstruction, made from specially designed bricks and reinforced concrete, was erected over its surviving remains. In plan the gate tower was 26.8 metres deep along the axis of the road and 10.5 metres wide; the width of the road passing under the arch was 6.4 metres. The height of the tower (12.5 m) was the same as the height of the earthen ramparts, but on top of it was the Church of the Annunciation (Tolochko 1981, p. 169). The Golden Gate was both a vital part of the system of defences and the main entrance into Kiev.

Lyadskie, the name of the second, eastern, gate, is derived from the word *lyadina*, meaning 'cleared woodland', and this suggests that in ancient times it led out on to wooded terrain (Tolochko 1983, p. 68). For a long time the exact location of the Lyadskie Gate had been unknown and it was only in 1981, during archaeological excavations in October Square, that it was discovered (Borovski & Sagaidak 1985, p. 59). It turned out to be built of wood, not bricks, like the Golden Gate. By contrast, the location of the Jewish Gate has not been established with any precision, although it is assumed to have been either in the area of the present-day Lvov Square (Tolochko 1983, pp. 68–83) or in the vicinity of Osipenko and Reitarskaya streets (Borovski & Sagaidak 1985, p. 85).

Within the space surrounded by these new fortifications, Yaroslav created grand monumental buildings, recruiting master craftsmen from Constantinople for their construction. The centrepiece of this complex was St Sophia's Cathedral, which, despite later alterations, has survived to this day (Figs 18.4b & 18.6).

Written sources proffer two different dates for the commencement of St Sophia: 1017 (*First Novgorod Chronicle*) and 1037 (*Primary Chronicle*). Expert opinion was divided, with one group of scholars favouring the early date (Ainalov 1917, Brunov 1952, Vysotski 1976, pp. 198–201, 240–51, Tolochko 1983, Logvin 1987) and another the later (Karger 1961, p. 101, Aseev 1980, Poppe 1981, pp. 15–66, Aseev 1987, Komech 1987, pp. 178–81, Rappoport 1988), but it is the latter's point of view that has been more thoroughly substantiated.

St Sophia's Cathedral is a grandiose structure of five naves, each with an apse and surrounded on three sides by two rows of high, two-storey galleries and ambulatories. Into the outer of these, at the west end, are incorporated two towers with staircases providing access to the choir and galleries. The measurements of the cathedral emphasize its grand scale: the west façade was 54 metres long, and the north and south walls were 42 metres long; its height, from the top of the central dome, is 29 metres. It is roofed by 13 domes in a pyramid formation, supported by drums based on pillars, cross-shaped in section, which create the open space of the five naves and apses. The centre and



**Figure 18.6** St Sophia's Cathedral as it looks today (top) and a model-reconstruction of the original design (bottom).

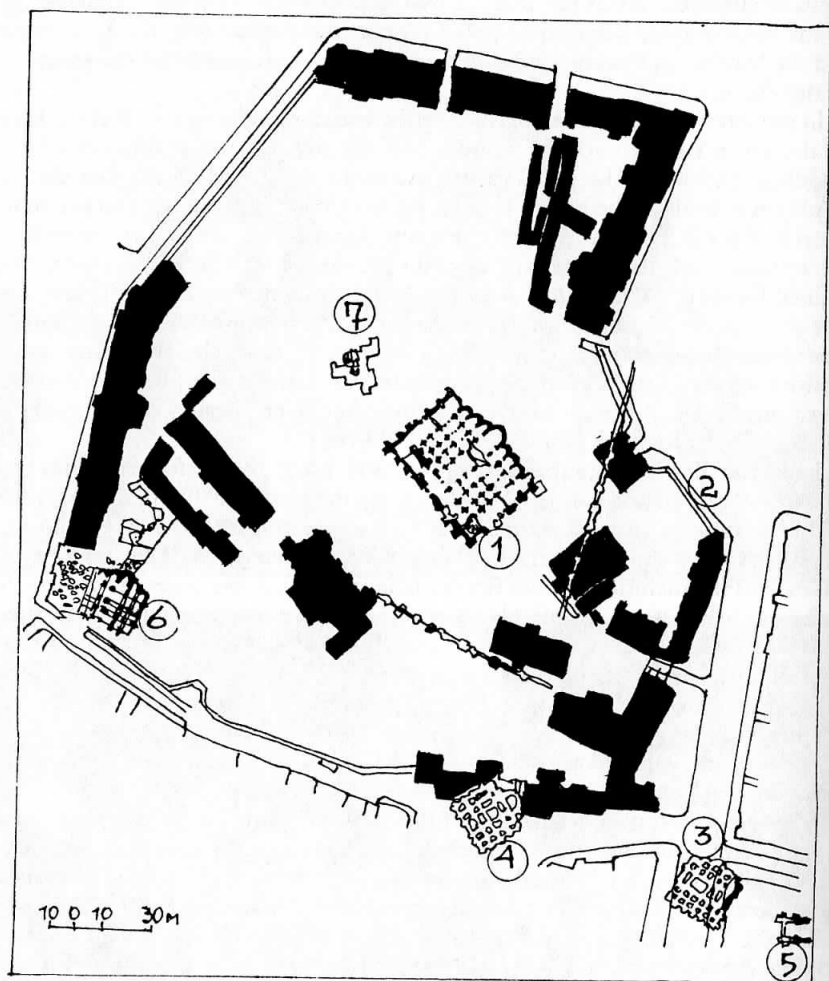
focus of attention in this massive internal space are the main dome and the top of the central apse, where frescoes of Christ, the Archangels, the Evangelists and the Mother of God hover against a golden background lit by the windows of the drum.

In the interior plan it is worth noting the enormous choir, which at the level of the second floor occupies almost half the area of the main core of the building, excluding the galleries. Its size must be related to the fact that St Sophia was built as the centre for the Russian metropolitan see and the main church of the Rus state. Thus its choir was designed not merely as somewhere for a prince – a prince who was beginning to introduce into Rus complex and refined forms of Byzantine courtly ritual and etiquette – to sit during services, but also a place for official receptions and royal ceremonies. This requirement determined its enormous space which in turn explains the pyramidal composition of the 13 domes, all supported by drums, the larger number of which were positioned precisely above the choir and were designed to provide a source of light for it (Komech 1972, pp. 50–64).

Like the Tithe Church, St Sophia was built by craftsmen from the Byzantine capital and can be regarded as a monument of the Constantinople school of architecture. Nevertheless, it contains many features that are unusual for Byzantine architecture: the large choir, the proliferation of domes, the five naves, and the inclusion of two tiers of galleries, which increases the area of the cathedral still further, effectively turning it into a nine-nave church. All these features stem from the specific Rus context: St Sophia was the most important ecclesiastical structure in Rus as a whole and was designed to hold an enormous number of people. The impressive effect was heightened by a monumental stone wall built around it. Remains of the residence of the Metropolitan, which was adjacent to the Cathedral, have been found during excavations (Rappoport 1982, pp. 13–14).

St Sophia epitomizes Yaroslav's interest in creating a new city that was a worthy capital of one of the largest states in the Europe of his day. The city's overall plan was clearly modelled on that of eastern Christendom's capital, Constantinople, and it is not coincidence that the main entrance to Kiev was called the Golden Gate and that the state's main church was dedicated to St Sophia. Another link with Constantinople is the appearance in the architectural complex (Fig. 18.7) of two patronal churches: St Georgii (Fig. 18.4c), the heavenly patron of Yaroslav the Wise, who at his baptism had been given the name Georgii, and St Irina, in honour of Yaroslav's wife, Princess Ingigerd, who had been baptized Irina. Neither of these churches, which in their day were impressive buildings, has survived. The remains of the church of St Georgii were excavated in 1934, 1937, and 1939 (Karger 1958, pp. 232–7) and again in 1979 (Borovski & Sagaidak 1985, pp. 52–7). Archaeologists have two candidates for the church of St Irina: the ruins excavated in 1833 by Lokhvitsky in Vladimir Street, not far from the wall round St Sophia (Karger 1961, pp. 216–26), and ruins found by Mileev in 1909–10 in the grounds of the Metropolitan's residence (Karger 1961, pp. 226–32). According to Rappoport, there are more reasons for accepting the second building as the Church





**Figure 18.7** Principal buildings in Yaroslav's City: 1 St Sophia's Cathedral, 2 wall of the Metropolitan's estate, 3 Church of St Irina, 4 Church of St George, 5 Palace, 6 Church of the Mother of God, 7 Bathhouse in the Metropolitan's estate.

of St Irina (Rappoport 1982, p. 14); he feels that the church on Vladimir Street may have been built on the orders of Yaroslav, but it is not one of those mentioned in extant written sources. The final component of the complex of monuments built by Yaroslav was a palace excavated by Velmin in 1913–14 (Karger 1961, pp. 76–7).

Archaeological excavations in Yaroslav's City carried out over a long period have made possible a thorough study of the residential buildings of the

11th to 13th centuries. Most of them were for individual households, and while the establishments connected with craft production were situated for the most part on the outskirts, the remaining area, to judge by the high status artefacts found during excavation, was occupied by the upper echelons of Kiev society (Borovski & Sagaidak 1985, p. 51). The main type of house was, just as in Vladimir's City, the sunken-featured building. In recent years, however, remains of timber-framed houses have also been found (Borovski & Sagaidak 1985, pp. 38–51), and excavations in 1981–2 produced evidence about the streets, which had been surfaced with wooden planking (Borovski & Sagaidak 1985, pp. 51–2).

### **Izyaslav-Svyatopolk's City – Gorod Izyaslava-Svyatopolka (11th–12th centuries)**

In the second half of the 11th and the first quarter of the 12th centuries, during the reigns of Yaroslav's sons, Izyaslav Yaroslavich (1054–73), Svyatoslav (1073–8), and Vsevolod (1078–93), and his grandchildren Svyatopolk Izyaslavich (1093–1113) and Vladimir Monomakh (1113–25), the fortified area of the town continued to grow. On a high spur, Mikhailovskaya Hill, running from the eastern side of Vladimir's City to the northwestern side of Yaroslav's City, another district grew up surrounded by strong fortifications. The most active phase of the construction coincided with the reigns of Izyaslav Yaroslavich and Svyatopolk Izyaslavich, and so this area is usually called Izyaslav-Svyatopolk's city in written sources (Tolochko 1983, pp. 78–80). Here in the late 11th and early 12th centuries another complex of monumental buildings was constructed. Its central feature was the Mikhailovski Zlatoverkhi Monastery, whose cathedral survived until the 1930s (Rappoport 1982, pp. 16–17). Karger attempted to demonstrate that this building was not in fact the Mikhailovski but the Dmitrievski Cathedral (1961, pp. 273–82), but this hypothesis has been refuted by Aseev (1961, p. 296). The Mikhailovski Cathedral, built in 1108, belonged to a new type of religious building: it was a three-nave cathedral with a sloping roof of a type that emerged in Kiev's architecture in the late 11th and the early 12th centuries, marking a departure from the Constantinople tradition and heralding a specifically Russian type of ecclesiastical building (Komech 1987, pp. 275).

This new architectural tradition had already found some expression in the cathedral of the Dmitrievski Monastery, built in the second half of the 11th century (Rappoport 1982, p. 17). Remains of this building were first identified as early as 1758; the site was excavated in 1838 by Annenkov, then again in 1936 (Aseev 1961, pp. 291–6, Voronin 1957, p. 259) and 1980 (Sagaidak & Chernov 1981, p. 114).

The fortifications of Izyaslav-Svyatopolk's City have unfortunately not been investigated, but domestic buildings inside were excavated by Karger in the 1930s and 1940s (Karger 1958, pp. 298–328). His work in the grounds of the Mikhailovski Zlatoverkhi Monastery revealed that this district was



intensively settled in the 12th and 13th centuries. No timber-frame houses were found and the main type of structure was the sunken-featured building. The artefacts recovered suggested that this part of Kiev was inhabited by people working for the local monasteries and craftsmen – builders, jewellers, artists, and glass-makers – engaged in the construction and decoration of churches. The best-known building investigated by Karger was the house of a craftsman making beads from rock crystal (Karger 1958, pp. 320–8).

### Kopyrev Konets (12th–13th centuries)

Next to the northwestern part of Kiev's centre lay another fortified area, Kopyrev Konets. This part of the town has not yet been subjected to thorough archaeological investigation, but the material recovered to date identifies it as a fortified suburb for traders and craftsmen occupying an area of 40 hectares (Tolochko 1983, pp. 86–8). The 12th and 13th centuries saw a good deal of stone and brick building here. Written sources mention the Church of St John (c. 1121) and the Semionovski Monastery (c. 1147). In addition, archaeological excavations have revealed other stone churches: one in the grounds of the Khudozhestvenny (Art) Institute (Karger 1961, pp. 391–402), others in the lanes now known as Kiyanovski (Karger 1961, pp. 402–7), and Nesterovski Pereulok (Tolochko & Aseev 1972). Although written sources do not refer to Kopyrev Konets until 1121, the churches at the Art Institute (Fig. 18.4d) and in the Kiyanovski Pereulok date from the second half of the 11th century. Evidently, from that point on, Kopyrev Konets was functioning as part of the city.

### Podol (late 9th–13th centuries) and other suburbs (11th–13th centuries)

The city's main suburb was Podol, or the Lower Town, situated at the foot of the Kiev hills on the bank of the River Dnieper. It was inhabited by traders and craftsmen. This extensive area of the town (c. 180 hectares) has played an important part in the life of Kiev since the city's earliest days and legendary accounts in chronicles refer to it on several occasions in connection with events in the 10th century. However, it was not until 1971, when one of the lines of Kiev's underground railway was being laid through Podol, that systematic study commenced; it has continued intensively ever since. During this time excavations have covered an area of over 10 000 square metres, recovering some of the most valuable archaeological assemblages relating to Kiev's early history.

Situated as it is on low land by the river, Podol suffered repeatedly from severe flooding when the Dnieper broke its banks. After some of these floods there would be a temporary lull in activity, and then life would begin again as before. This explains the unique stratigraphy of Podol, where occupation

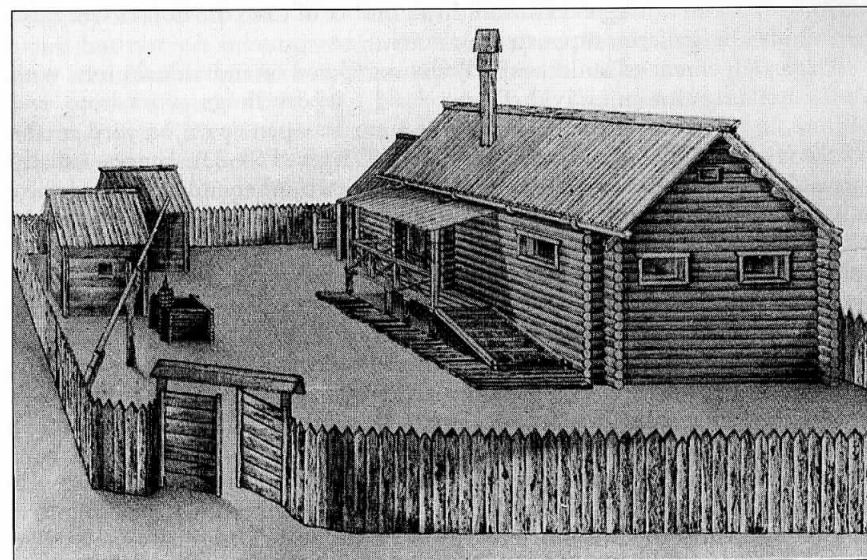


Figure 18.8 Reconstruction of 11th-century property in the Podol district (Tolochko).

levels alternate with sterile strata of alluvium consisting of sand and loam. The total recoverable archaeology, therefore, is far deeper (over 11 m) here than in the Upper Town, and fairly thick bands of alluvium have protected the individual occupation levels. The good state of preservation of finds, particularly organic material, can also be attributed to the higher than average moisture of the deposits. These factors combine to provide a rare opportunity for archaeologists investigating medieval Russian towns to follow a progression of undisturbed stratigraphy extending over a considerable length of time, from the 9th to the 18th centuries (Tolochko 1981, pp. 10–11, 15, Gupalo 1982, pp. 15–33). It has also been possible to produce a dendrochronological sequence for Kiev (Tolochko 1981, pp. 425–50, Sagaidak 1985). The earliest dendrodate for Podol, which itself has more than 60 timber buildings (Tolochko 1976b), is 887 (Tolochko 1981, p. 449), which supports a view that the district was settled as early as the late 9th century. As in the Upper Town, the main type of house was sunken-featured, and timber-framed buildings have been found only on what is now Reitarskaya Street.

Some of these Podol buildings have survived to a considerable height, as much as 9 horizontal planks deep in places, and this has made it possible to carry out a fairly detailed reconstruction (Fig. 18.8) of their original appearance (Tolochko 1981, pp. 121–40, Tolochko 1983, pp. 112–14, 123, Gupalo 1982, p. 47). Two types have been identified: one-chamber and two-chamber (or 'five-wall') buildings. The entrances for both were set very high, since elevated porches with steps were added; traces of these have been found on

various occasions during excavation. In a number of cases the houses were also surrounded by galleries supported on posts.

The arrangement of buildings in Podol was based on individual plots, with all the buildings for an individual household – its dwellings, workshops, and outbuildings – around the edge, thus leaving an open space or yard in the centre (Gupalo 1982, pp. 47–8, Tolochko 1983, pp. 118–23). Fences, usually of plank construction, separated the plots from each other and from the street. It has not yet been possible to excavate fully the whole of any single household plot in Podol, so any idea of size can be only an estimate, but current calculations suggest between 250 and 350 square metres for plots belonging to ordinary townspeople, and between 600 and 700 square metres for those belonging to leading members of the trader class. No large-scale feudal households have yet been found (Tolochko 1983, pp. 122–3).

The wider morphology of the street and plot organization was determined not by the fact that the main roads led towards the city gates, as in the Upper Town, but by the geographical position of the site. It stretched along a terrace of land between the Dnieper and the foot of Kiev's ridge of hills, in what Tolochko defines as a 'branched row' plan (Tolochko 1983, p. 126). It is interesting to note that the morphology of Podol, which originally took shape in the pre-Mongol period, survived until the district was replanned after the fire of 1811.

Excavations in Podol have shown that between the 10th and the 13th centuries it was the main centre of craft manufacturing in Kiev. It contains the largest concentration of medieval industrial complexes found in the city (Gupalo & Ivakin 1980), including extensive iron-working (Gupalo 1982, pp. 53–7), a very large glass-making factory, the scale of whose output can be judged by nearly 100 kilograms of lead found in it (Tolochko 1983, p. 86), two workshops for amber (Gupalo 1982, pp. 86–8), a workshop manufacturing spindles (Gupalo 1982, pp. 62–6), and, in the area of the Zhitny market, a centre for leather production (Tolochko 1983, pp. 138–9, Plate 15, No. 14). A find of particular interest in Podol was a jeweller's workshop, which produced cast ornamental plates for ceremonial belts and bridles (Gupalo 1982, pp. 74–82). Until recently it had been assumed that plates of this kind were made in the Orient and subsequently traded to central and eastern Europe. The discovery of the Kiev workshop, dating from the 10th century, demonstrates that ornaments of this type were distributed widely from Lake Baikal to Hungary from workshops based in Europe, possibly employing craftsmen from the Orient (Orlov 1982, pp. 171–3, Gupalo 1982, pp. 82). It is certainly likely that the Kiev workshop employed Oriental craftsmen, since one of the casts preserves a Kufic Arabic inscription which may be variously interpreted as 'Yasid', 'Turk' or 'blessing' (Gupalo 1982, p. 82, Orlov 1982, p. 171).

During the 12th and 13th centuries Podol saw considerable construction in stone and brick. In 1976–80 the remains of its main church, dedicated to the Assumption of the Pirogoshchaya Mother of God, were excavated (Fig. 18.4c; Tolochko 1981, pp. 222–5). Erected in 1131–6, according to written sources, the excavations suggest that it underwent fundamental rebuilding in 1170–80

(Rappoport 1984, p. 61). The remains of another large building have been found but not yet investigated at 20 Koloshskaya Street, and some scholars have identified it as the Mikhailovskaya Church, called in a chronicle the 'Novgorod Church' (Tolochko 1983, pp. 83–6). There is also documentary reference to a Church of Boris and Gleb, or Turova Church, in Podol, but its site has not yet been established. Several places where the remains of pre-Mongol buildings built of 'plinths' have been seen but not yet excavated have been put forward as candidates: one on the corner of Voloshkoi Val and Nizhni Val (Rappoport 1982, p. 20), another nearby on Nizhni Val, and another – perhaps the most likely, given the name – on Borisoglebskaya Street (Rappoport 1982, p. 20).

In addition to Podol and Kopyrev Konets, there were other suburbs on the plateau tops of the Zamkovaya, Detinka, and Shchekavitsa hills (Tolochko 1976a, p. 86). On each of these archaeological horizons associated with the period of ancient Rus have been found, including, on Zamkovaya Hill, traces of craft manufacturing and, on Shchekavitsa Hill, foundation trenches of a church mentioned in a chronicle of 1182.

### **The satellite settlements and establishments (11th–13th centuries)**

Apart from the Upper and Lower Towns, which constituted the central nucleus of Kiev, there was a wider area of communities whose activities were directly related to those of the capital, particularly monasteries, suburban villages, and princely residences. These were integral to the whole, and today all are located within the urban area of Kiev.

The Monastery of the Caves, founded in the 11th century, had a special role not only for Kiev itself but also for the whole of Russia. It is situated 6 kilometres to the south of Yaroslav's City, further down the Dnieper on Pecherskaya Hill. Its name derives from the extensive network of caves that formed the original core of the monastery, and as early as 1073 its main cathedral, the Cathedral of the Assumption, was 'plinth'-built. This became a shrine for pilgrims from all over Russia (Rappoport 1982, pp. 23–5) and remains the definitive example of the architectural style created in ancient Rus (Fig. 18.4f). Next to it was a small two-storey baptistery. At the beginning of the 12th century the monastery was surrounded by a 'plinth' wall with a gate tower, the Svyatye (Holy) Gate, containing a church dedicated to the Trinity. This wall no longer exists and only part of it has been found in archaeological excavations (Bogusevich 1959), but the Svyatye Gate has survived intact, although its exterior was modified in the baroque style during the 18th century (Rappoport 1982, pp. 25–6). The refectory was built at the same time as the wall and this has been studied during recent excavations (Kharlamov 1987). With a history of repairs and rebuilding which dates back to the pre-Mongol period, the monastery acquired its final form in the 17th century. The cathedral was, unfortunately, destroyed by an explosion in the Second

World War, but it has been faithfully restored to its original state using information recorded before 1939 and derived from more recent research (Kholostenko 1955, 1967, 1975, 1976, Tolochko 1981, pp. 193–202).

Next to the Monastery of the Caves was the village of Beryostovo, known from chronicle references and dating from the end of the 10th century onwards. In the reign of Vladimir Svyatoslavich, Beryostovo was used as the prince's country residence. In the first quarter of the 12th century, during the reign of Vladimir Monomakh, a Church of the Saviour was built here for his use and part of it has survived (Fig. 18.4g; Rappoport 1982, pp. 22–3). Its eastern end, destroyed in the Middle Ages, was excavated by Pokryshkin in 1914 (Karger 1961, pp. 383–91), and a new study of it was undertaken in the 1970s (Aseev & Kharlamov 1979, pp. 84–90). There is reason to believe that the Church of the Saviour in Beryostovo was one of the first to have an architectural composition based on a central tower (Shtender 1981). This gives it particular importance, since it is the precursor of a specific type of building which developed fully in the late 12th and early 13th centuries as a Russian national variation of the Byzantine tradition (Rappoport & Ioannisyan 1988, p. 292). In the later 12th century this building was used as a mortuary church for the descendants of Vladimir Monomakh: his son Yuri Dolgoruki was buried there in 1158 and his grandson Gleb Yurievich in 1173.

Between central Kiev and the village of Beryostovo was the Klovski Monastery, founded in the 1170s by Stefan, Father Superior of the Monastery of the Caves. Prior to this, in the late 11th and early 12th centuries, a large church dedicated to the Vlakhernskaya Mother of God had been built here, but this has not survived (Rappoport 1982, pp. 21–2). In 1974–5 archaeologists excavated the foundation trenches of this early church (Movchan & Kharlamov 1979, Tolochko 1981, pp. 213–22), and two conflicting models for its reconstruction have been generated (Fig. 18.4h). The first (left) shows it as an elongated three-nave church, built round eight pillars and surrounded by two rows of galleries; on the west façade of the main part of the building were two two-storey side chapels, one of which was used as a baptistery and the other as a stair tower (Aseev 1982, pp. 100–1, 109–10). The second model (right) shows it with only one row of galleries, but with five naves and a large dome, supported, not by four piers but by eight pillars, as found in Greek churches of the mid-Byzantine period (Logvin 1980). Logvin's reconstruction model is the more convincing.

To the south of the Monastery of the Caves and 3 kilometres further down the Dnieper was the Vydubsky Monastery (Movchan 1982), parts of whose main (Mikhailovsky) cathedral (Rappoport 1982, pp. 26–7) have survived (Fig. 18.4i). Today the Mikhailovsky Cathedral consists of a cube-shaped ruin with two pillars, a dome, an apse, and a stair tower incorporated into the main body of the building, but the original eastern part of the building was uncovered in the course of archaeological investigations by Karger in 1945 (Karger 1961, pp. 300–10) and by Movchan and Bykov in 1972 (Movchan 1975). The cathedral was destroyed by landslips and erosion caused by the Dnieper, which in the Middle Ages flowed at the foot of the steep cliff of

Vydubitskaya Hill, a high river terrace on which the monastery was built. This particularly affected the eastern end and the foundations of the apse have been lost altogether. In 1199–1200 the chronicles record that a stone and brick revetment wall was built to strengthen the slope of the hill beneath the Mikhailovski Cathedral and stop the erosion. The hill itself, however, was honeycombed with caves created in the Middle Ages and must be associated with the monastery (Tolochko 1983, pp. 137–45), although chronicles also record a palace here, known as the Red Court of Prince Vsevolod Yaroslavich (Tolochko 1972, p. 166).

The southernmost establishment of Kiev was the Gniletsky Monastery, the remains of whose cathedral were found in the course of archaeological excavations in 1980. It was a small building with four pillars and one apse dating to the late 12th or early 13th centuries (Kharlamov 1985, pp. 116–19). And the northernmost was the Kirillovski Monastery, founded in the middle of the 12th century by a Kievan prince of the Chernigov dynasty, Ysevolod Olgovich (Tolochko 1976, p. 88). Its principal church is well preserved, despite baroque 'adornment' (Karger 1961, pp. 444–53), and important studies of it were made in 1949–54 and 1965–7 by Kholostenko to establish its original appearance (Kholostenko 1960, 1967, 1975, 1976). The Kirillovskaya Church, with its single dome based on six pillars, was part of an architectural trend in 12th-century Kiev inspired by the Chernigovs, whose Olgovich line used it as a mortuary (Rappoport 1984).

There was another suburb between the Kirillovski Monastery and the town known as Dorogozhichi, where the road leading north out of Kiev divided into three, one branch continuing north to Novgorod, another turning northwest to Vladimir-Volynski, and the third northeast to Chernigov (Tolochko 1972, pp. 100–51). Two major structures have been excavated here: the Church of Nikola Jordanski on Lissaya Hill, dating from the late 11th and early 12th centuries (Karger 1961, pp. 407–8), and another building on the site of plot no. 59 on Frunze Street (Tolochko 1983, p. 89). To the west of the city in the valley of the River Lybed were the villages housing servants for the royal households at Predslavino (Tolochko 1983, pp. 89–90) and Shelvovo (Movchan 1985).

### Outlying defences (10th–13th centuries)

A ring of fortified towns a short distance outside the city played a special role in Kiev's defences; three of them can be identified as the most important (Tolochko 1980, pp. 132–41). The first, Vyshgorod, lies 15 kilometres to the north of Kiev. With its massive fortifications it was at one time administered by independent princes, although it was never an independent town as such, since it also served as a fortified residence for the princes of Kiev (Tolochko 1980, pp. 130–6). Its status was elevated when princes Boris and Gleb, the first Russian saints, regarded as the holy patrons of Rus, were buried here and it acquired structures befitting the first Russian centre of pilgrimage. In 1020



Yaroslav the Wise built a large wooden church or mausoleum over the relics of his brothers and men and women from all over Russia came here to pay homage. In 1072 it was replaced by a new wooden church, which in its turn in the late 11th and early 12th centuries was replaced by a building of stone and brick, which was finally completed in 1115 (Fig. 18.4j; Rappoport 1982, pp. 27–8). This cathedral, with its three naves, was larger than any other similar building in the whole of pre-Tartar Russia. Unfortunately, it was badly damaged in the 13th century when Kiev was captured by the Tartars, and finally, in the 17th century, its ruins were dismantled. A thorough archaeological investigation of the church was carried out in 1952 by Karger (Karger 1961, pp. 310–36).

The second large outpost, Belgorod, lies 23 kilometres to the southwest of the city, and it contained one of the prince of Kiev's castles (Tolochko 1980, p. 137). It always kept its dependence on Kiev, even when an independent prince, Rurik Rostislavovich, took up residence there at the end of the 12th century, and when he became the official ruler of Rus with Prince Svyatoslav Vsevolodovich, Belgorod became the second capital of the Kievan duchy. Indeed, it was at this time, during the reign of Rurik Rostislavovich, that monumental buildings began to appear in Belgorod. Two churches were built and although no longer extant they were excavated, one in 1966–7 by Mezentseva and Aseev (Rappoport 1982, pp. 28–9) and the other in 1968–9 by Rybakov (Rappoport 1982, p. 29).

The third large outpost, Vasilev, formed part of a line of fortresses along the River Stugna. Although founded as early as the 10th century it rose to prominence only in the 12th, and its archaeological assemblages date primarily from the 12th and 13th centuries (Tolochko 1980, p. 141).

Nearer to the city, 6 kilometres to the south of Vydubicha, was another fortified settlement, known as Kitaevo, which served as an additional defensive outpost (Tolochko 1980, pp. 139–40). A barrow cemetery on the site suggests that this particular settlement came into being between the 10th and 11th centuries (Movchan & Stepanenko 1976), and later a monastery with cave network was established within its confines (Tolochko 1976, pp. 142–5).

### 12th- and 13th-century developments

In the 12th and 13th centuries, when feudal fragmentation was gathering pace, Kiev gradually began to lose its position as the central place for the whole of Russia, although it still enjoyed a high degree of political and, in particular, religious authority. However, archaeological excavations within the Upper Town and Podol do testify to the continuing active life of Kiev then, and most of the domestic buildings excavated within the city belong to that period.

There is also evidence for the continued construction of monumental buildings during the 12th and 13th centuries in virtually all parts of the city. In rapid succession during the 12th century there appeared within Vladimir's City the Andreevski, Yanchin, and Fyodorovski monasteries (Tolochko

1976a, pp. 78–9, Kilievich & Kharlamov 1987), the Vasilievskaya Church in the New Court on the Voznesenski slope (Rappoport 1982, pp. 17–18, 114), and, at the beginning of the 13th century, the Church of the Exaltation of the Cross (Rappoport 1982, p. 114). Another building erected in Kiev's citadel during the second half of the 12th century is of particular interest. Not far from the site of the Desyatinnaya Church, excavations in 1975–6 revealed the remains of a 'plinth' building, from its plan clearly a type of rotunda, rarely found in the architecture of medieval Russia (Borovski & Tolochko 1979). Tolochko felt that this building was secular, believing it to be a palace (Tolochko 1980, p. 73), but it is more likely that the rotunda was a Roman Catholic church belonging to the Dominican mission in Kiev (Putsko 1981, pp. 230–31).

Although Kiev lost its pre-eminent position in Russia during the 12th century, it retained enormous economic vitality, recovering very rapidly, for example, from the crushing defeat inflicted upon it in 1169 by the troops of the Vladimir-Suzdal Prince, Andrei Bogolyubski. In fact, the archaeology provides solid evidence for the constant high level of its economic activity and the development of almost all types of craft and trade during the whole of the pre-Tartar period (Rybakov 1948, Tolochko 1980, pp. 38–66, 1983, pp. 65–100). A particularly useful indicator are hoards containing numerous pieces worked by master craftsmen (Korzukhina 1954, pp. 83–4, 90–91, 105–26). Within the Upper Town alone over 52 such hoards have been found since the beginning of the 19th century (Tolochko 1980, pp. 40–41); perhaps the most interesting of them are the ones that contain refined gold cloisonné jewellery (Makarova 1975, pp. 94–8).

### The impact of the Tartar invasion of 1240

The brilliant development of Kiev was cut short by the devastating sack of the city by the Tartar hordes of Khan Batiya. The blow dealt to the ancient capital was so crushing that it made little substantial recovery until the end of the 17th century. Many individual archaeological discoveries have been directly related to this event: for example, several communal graves, dating from the 13th century, have been found, producing as many as 2000 skeletons (Karger 1958, p. 506, Tolochko 1980, pp. 213–14). Other excavations in Vladimir's City and in the grounds of the Mikhailovski Monastery (Karger 1958, pp. 496–8), on Starokievskaya Hill and in the neighbourhood of the cable railway (Tolochko 1980, pp. 214–15), and near the foundations of the Vasilievskaya Church in the New Court (Kilievich 1982, pp. 126–7), have revealed burnt houses where some skeletons were found under collapsed roofs and others lay next to the buildings. Many of the skulls showed signs of violent death, and a large number of women's and children's skeletons lay alongside those of men.

During the capture of Kiev and Vyshgorod the Tithe Church and the church erected as a mausoleum for Boris and Gleb were destroyed at the order of Batiya. The Upper Town virtually ceased to exist: its ordinary domestic



buildings were almost entirely destroyed and the population eliminated or led into captivity. Some survivors fled, and from Matthew of Paris we know that some refugees from Kiev made their way as far as Saxony. All that was left in the enormous area once occupied by the medieval capital of Rus were a few isolated pockets of activity and those stone churches that remained intact. These were, however, completely abandoned and gradually fell into ruins in the course of the 14th to 16th centuries (Ivakin 1982, p. 58). Many of these ruins were still visible in the 17th century, when they were drawn by the Dutch artist A. van Westefeld (Smirnov 1908). Apart from these the archaeology of the Upper Town reveals almost a total absence of levels dating from the 14th–16th centuries, which would appear to suggest that the area was left unoccupied.

It has been argued recently, however, that the absence of late medieval levels could be explained by their total destruction during the period of renewed activity from the later 17th century onwards (Ivakin 1982, pp. 15–16, 60–61). Consequently, the Upper Town may not have been totally abandoned.

There is no reason to disagree with Ivakin's assertion that the majority of the monumental buildings were not destroyed at the time of Kiev's capture by Batiya, since, in fact, the nomads had neither reason nor facility for destroying stone buildings when they took the city. He was right also to point out that it was primarily 'parish churches and other buildings lacking economic support' which disappeared. By contrast, other churches belonging to the metropolitan see, to princes, to leading monasteries or to former powerful feudal lords, such as St Sophia, the Pirogoshcha Church, the Church of the Assumption, the Mikhailovski Zlatoverkhi, the Kirillovski and Vydubitski cathedrals continued to exist for a long time and almost all of them have survived up to the present day (Ivakin 1982, p. 60). This, Ivakin argues, suggests continued activity of a certain kind. But even if this is true, it was at a low level, since funds for the upkeep of these major buildings were often inadequate and as early as the 17th century they were in decline, as the drawings of van Westefeld show. Also, most of the pre-Tartar buildings in Kiev which have survived were subjected to repairs at the time of renewal at the end of the 17th and beginning of the 18th centuries.

Despite the validity of some elements of Ivakin's arguments about the churches, it would be difficult to agree with his assertion that after 1240 the city of Kiev continued to exist within its previous limits. Undoubtedly the levels in the Upper Town have been seriously disrupted by the activities of a large 19th- and 20th-century city, but it is not only negative evidence from the 14th to 15th centuries that gives grounds for concluding that after the Tartar invasion this area was abandoned. There is the positive evidence from excavations that whole households were destroyed at the time when Batiya took Kiev, suggesting that the city would have been deserted for a very long period of time. There is certainly no evidence for new houses being built on the sites of the old and the people who perished were not buried. More indirect support for the idea of abandonment comes from the fact that by the

end of the 13th century the metropolitan see had been transferred from Kiev to Vladimir on the Klyazma. Also the Kievan princes, even after their dynasty re-established itself in the 14th century, had their residence not within the citadel, as before, but on Zamkovaya Hill, which in the 11th to 13th centuries had been almost completely outside the city.

### The later Middle Ages and beyond

Unlike the Upper Town, which had been subjected to the harshest devastation, the Lower Town, Podol, appears to have fared significantly better. There is no doubt that it too was plundered, but there are none of the signs of violent destruction that exist in the Upper Town, at which Batiya's main onslaught was specifically aimed. Admittedly levels dating to the 14th to 16th centuries have also hardly survived in Podol, since they too were disturbed by intensive developments in the 17th to 19th centuries (Gupalo 1982, p. 21). Nevertheless, written sources reveal that the centre of activity in Kiev had shifted here after 1240 (Ivakin 1982, pp. 69–72), and continued during the whole of the later Middle Ages. Even as late as the mid-19th century Podol was 'to some degree synonymous with Kiev' (Ivakin 1982, p. 69).

Between the 14th and 15th centuries monumental building began again in Podol after a long interval. In 1975 foundations dating to this period were found and can be associated with the late medieval Church of the Nativity of the Mother of God (Ivakin 1979, pp. 107–24). The main building material was no longer the characteristic 'plinths' of the early period but bar-shaped bricks with grooves along the length of their lower edge. 'Plinths' were also used, but only as a subsidiary material.

For 100 years after the Mongol invasion, princely power in Kiev was of a strictly nominal variety. The city was regarded as a possession of those princes who were placed upon the throne by the Golden Horde, who had their own appanage domains and for that reason no longer lived in Kiev itself. The main political force in the city became for a while the Metropolitan, until the see was transferred to the Vladimir-Suzdal principality at the end of the 13th century. Independent princely power was briefly re-established in the 14th century, but by the middle of the same century Kiev had become part of the Grand Principality of Lithuania, with the princes being made vassals of Lithuanian overlords (Ivakin 1982, pp. 16–51). During his period another place in addition to Podol assumes importance in the historical topography of the city – that is, the prince's palace on Zamkovaya Hill. Later, when Kiev was part of Polish territory, a wooden castle for the Polish Voivodes was built on the same site.

The historical topography which took shape in Kiev in the mid-14th century remained virtually unchanged up until the mid-17th century. After the War of Liberation against Poland (1648–54) and the reunification of the Ukraine and Russia, efforts were made to resettle the area of the Upper Town. In 1654, on orders from the Moscow government, the medieval

Russian fortifications of Vladimir's city, of Yaroslav's city, and of Izyaslav-Svyatopolk's City were restored, and thus Kiev was re-established within its original limits. It was this situation that was recorded on the plan of Kiev made in 1695 by Colonel I. Ushakov on order from Peter the Great (Alfyorova & Kharlamov 1982, pp. 7–96). Despite the fact that the city had been restored within its original boundaries, it would appear from Ushakov's plan that Podol still continued to be the area where the most active urban life was concentrated. This was the situation for a long time, until, finally, in the middle of the 19th century, an active revival of Kiev's Upper Town was begun and it once again became the city's effective centre.

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